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"It is a demon!" muttered Pablo, as, with eyes fixed with terror, he gazed upon the awful form.

THE WINGED WHALE; OR, THE MYSTERY OF RED RUPERT.

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CHAPTER I.

THE WATER DEMON.

The stars twinkled brightly in the dark sky, and were reflected back in little ripples of shining light as they gleamed on the somber waters of Pensacola Bay.

It was about nine o' the night, in the year 1814.

A little fishing sloop, containing three fishermen, had just rounded the southern point of Santa Rosa Island and was beating up the bay toward the city of Pensacola.

One of the fishermen, a little wiry fellow, known as Pablo Domingo, was stretched out at full length in the bow of the "smack," keeping a sharp look-out ahead. The second man was crouched down in the center of the boat, while the third was at the helm.

"Keep her a little to the southward, Gomez!" cried the fisherman in the bow to the brawny fellow whose strong hand was on the tiller.

"Ay, ay," he responded.

"Pablo, what story was that that Diego was telling you on the beach just before we set sail this morning?" asked the man in the center of the boat, who was called Jose.

"You have sharp ears, Jose," said Pablo. "Well, from his manner I guessed that he was telling of something worth hearing, and so I listened," replied Jose, honestly.

"And what did you hear?"

"Something about some terrible fright that he had got in the bay."

"Bah!" cried Gomez, with a look of contempt upon his face. "Diego is a coward; why, his own shadow in the moonbeams would cause him to take to his heels."

"He has seen more than a shadow if he speaks the truth," said Pablo, gravely.

"Well, what has he seen? Come, the story!" cried Gomez, impatiently.

"Hast thou never heard the story of the specter that is said to haunt this bay?" asked Pablo, mysteriously.

"What, the spirit of the Indian chief who was killed near yonder headland?" and Gomez pointed to the north as he spoke.

"Yes."

"And has Diego seen the specter?"

"He can not tell exactly what he saw,"

replied Pablo; "but I'll tell you what he told me. He had left the town in the morning and ran outside of the island to the fishing-grounds, as we have done to-day. Night had set in when he hoisted sail for home.

The breeze was light, and when he reached yonder headland—he had run close in to the shore to avoid the set of the tide that was on the ebb—he fancied he saw a light twinkling up the little inlet; the one behind yon headland, that is called Bayou Achee.

Curious to learn the reason of the light being there, he turned the prow of his boat toward the inlet. You know the mouth of it is very narrow and fringed with tall timber, although, beyond it widens into quite a bay and winds some ten or fifteen miles inland."

"Yes, yes!" cried his companions, who were listening eagerly.

"The night was very dark; Diego could hardly see a boat's length before him. As he entered the narrow passage that leads to the bayou, the dense gloom of the tree-shadows made it seem as if he was sailing on a sea of ink. The breeze died away. Before, behind, and all around him was darkness. Eagerly he looked: the glimmering light had disappeared. Believing that his eyes had deceived him, he put his helm up to return to the bay. As he slowly forged around—for the breeze was so light that it hardly stirred the sail—a strange circle of bluish light danced upon the water within the gloom of the bayou. In the center of the light appeared the outline of a horrible form. Exactly what it was like Diego could not say; for hardly had his eyes rested upon it when a sudden, fitful gust of wind filled his sail, and he glided through the dark passage into the waters of the bay. When he again looked toward the bayou the light had disappeared; he saw nothing but darkness."

"A wonderful story," said Jose, after a moment's silence.

"All a lie!" cried Gomez, quickly; "a

more arrant coward than Diego never existed. I'll bet a bottle of the best wine in yonder town that he saw neither light nor demon form—that he never was within the shadows of yonder inlet!"

"Tush, Gomez!" exclaimed Pablo; "be reasonable. Why should he lie about the matter?"

"So that he may persuade good men that his blood has some fire in it. I'll wager that if we sail into yon dark passage, no mystic light will stop our way."

Jose made the sign of the cross in fright. "The saints protect us, Gomez! what should put such a thought into your head? Would you brave the power of the Evil One?"

"I'm a good Catholic, and I do not fear Satan himself!" replied Gomez, stoutly. "So, comrades, if your hearts are as firm as mine, I'll turn the bow of our boat toward Bayou Achee, and we'll see if we can not make something out of this mysterious light and demon form."

"Suppose that the specter should draw our boat into some terrible whirlpool?" suggested Jose.

"I fear not; what have we done that we should come to harm?" demanded Gomez.

"I for one, fear not," said Pablo.

"Good!" exclaimed Gomez; "shall we go, then?"

"But the specter—"

"Jose, thou art as big a coward as Diego!" cried Gomez, impatiently. "We will see no specter. 'Twas a will-o'-the-wisp dancing in the shadows of the trees that dazzled Diego's eyes. Come, shall we for the inlet?"

"Hold your course as you will, but if the specter sinks our boat, remember that I warned you," said Jose, who had no stomach for the adventure.

With a turn of his wrist, Gomez put the helm up, and the little craft, obedient to her master's will, bore toward the inlet.

"We'll get out the sweeps as we pass the headland, for the wind is from the shore, and we'll need them. We can pull in slowly, and if we discover any thing suspicious, why, we can return," Gomez said.

"Diego swore that he spoke naught but the truth," Pablo observed.

"It may be that there are some Indians encamped on the shores of the bayou," Gomez remarked. "If we are to encounter mortals, I fear not. My musket here," and he touched it with his foot as he spoke—it was in the bottom of the boat—"will protect us. It is loaded with a good ounce ball."

"But, if it is the specter of the Indian chief?"

"Then a good round prayer or two will scare him off," Gomez replied.

Quickly the light boat cut her way through the sullen waters.

The night was very dark; the moon had not yet risen and the stars alone shed their rays on sea and land.

Closer and closer came the boat to the dark headland, crowned with cypress trees, that, like a storm-beaten castle, guarded the entrance to Bayou Achee.

The fishermen passed from the open waters of the bay into the narrow channel that led to the land-locked bay.

The shadows of the trees fell thick and heavy around the little boat that danced so lightly upon the surface of the tide.

No sound broke the funeral silence of the night except the idle flapping of the sails against the mast.

Within the sheltered inlet the boat no longer glided swiftly on; the winds that had filled her canvas lulled. A dead calm was around and about them.

The very air seemed heavy and thick.

In spite of his courage, Gomez shuddered when the gloomy shadows that guarded the entrance to the bayou fell upon him.

The boat lost its headway and remained almost motionless upon the bosom of the dark waters.

With straining eyes the fishermen gazed upon the gloom that covered the surface of the bay and then rose upward like a dark wall till it met the stars of heaven.

They saw no light or sign of life within the bayou.

"Get out the sweeps," said Gomez, softly.

The dread influence of the hour and place had its effect upon the spirit of the fisherman.

Slowly and softly the oars descended into the water.

The fishermen pulled as though they feared at each stroke to wake the specters of the lonely water covert.

The little craft felt the power of the strong arms, and she glided slowly on, the dark waters rippling with a low and mournful song from her sharp bows.

A dozen times had the long oars dipped into the murky tide; a dozen times had the drops of water—like long strings of elton pearls, the prizes of Orient climes—fallen from the polished blades and returned to the bosom from whence they sprang, when a sudden start and a muffled cry of Gomez held the fishermen, like statues, to their seats.

Dark as was the night, yet they could see

that the face of stout-hearted Gomez was pale with terror. His eyes were fixed upon the darkness before him and were staring with a stony glare.

For a moment the two looked upon the face of their comrade in amazement not unmixed with horror.

"Look!" Gomez said, in low, earnest tones, and with his finger he pointed over the bow of the boat.

Slowly the two turned their heads. They guessed from the expression upon their comrade's face that they were about to behold a startling sight.

Afar off on the dark surface of the water gleamed a circle of strange, bluish light.

It was, apparently, some twenty feet in diameter.

The gleaming circle made the surrounding darkness ten times more intense by the contrast.

Then, to their horror, they saw that the strange light was advancing toward them.

With staring eyes they gazed upon the mystic light, fear tugging with giant force at their heart-strings.

And as they looked upon the circle, they saw a dark form advancing in its center!

The form seemed to rise from the waters of the bayou.

It was like the head of a huge fish, and from the shoulders extended gigantic wings. Its eyes were eyes of fire, that shed a lurid glare upon the darkness of the night; they seemed like red coals.

"The Virgin save us!" cried Gomez, in low tones of horror; "see you the horrible figure?"

"It is a demon!" muttered Pablo, as, with eyes fixed with terror, he gazed upon the awful form.

Jose could not speak, but strove to pray to the saints to save him from the evil thing that had risen from the dark waters.

"It seems like a whale!" muttered Gomez, breathlessly. "I have sailed in northern seas, where the storm-king rages amid the icebergs; there I have seen the sea-monster, but this terrible thing has a different kind of head and wings; a winged whale my eyes never saw before."

"It is no living thing; it is a demon! look at its eyes of fire!" gasped Pablo, in fright.

Then, suddenly, the huge mouth of the beast or demon—whatever it was—opened, and a broad sheet of flame burst out upon the air. For a moment it lighted up the little bay and then all was darkness.

The circle of blue light and the terrible monster, that was like unto a winged whale, both had vanished.

Like men awakened from a terrible spell, the fishermen bent to their oars, and paused not till their little boat floated on the waters of the bay.

CHAPTER II. THE RECOGNITION.

WHILE the fishermen were flying from the terrible form which they had conjured from the dark waters, all the beauty and fashion of the city of Pensacola had gathered in the spacious barracks of the fort, that had, for the nonce, been turned into a ball-room.

The rude walls of the shed—for it was little more—were decorated with the flags of the regiment—the ball was given by the officers of the troops that garrisoned the fort—and green boughs.

Long taper candles, almost countless in number, placed wherever they could gain vantage ground, lighted up the scene.

The gay uniforms of the soldiers, and the bright-colored silk and satin dresses of the ladies, mingled with the plain coats of the civilians.

It was the grandest ball that Pensacola had ever seen.

In a corner of the room stood two men conversing. Their dress told that they were Spanish officers; the wonderful likeness between them—though one was old and the other young—said that they were kindred in blood.

The elder of the two was a man, probably, of fifty years, tall, muscular in build, and with the firm carriage of the head and shoulders that told of years of military life. His face was a strange one; hair, iron-gray in hue and waving in crisp curls, clustered over a high forehead, that was tanned almost to the hue of the Indian; his eyes were jet-black and as keen as the orbs of a hawk; his nose was curved like the beak of a bird of prey, and his massive chin, hid by a full beard, iron-gray in color like his hair, told of a firm will.

Such was the person of Don Carlos Alvarado, the commandante of Pensacola. The city at the time we write of belonged to Spain and was garrisoned by Spanish troops. His son, Estevan, was strikingly like his father in appearance. His hair and eyes were black, his form slender and graceful, not cast in the rougher mold of his sire.

Estevan Alvarado held the commission of captain in the Spanish service.

"The old barracks is ringing with many a merry song to-night," said the commandante, gazing, a pleasant smile upon his face, on the joyous throng.

"Yes," replied Estevan, shortly, a moody look upon his handsome features.

The intonation of the word was caught by the quick ear of the commandante.

He turned his eyes upon his son's face for a moment.

"What's the matter, Estevan?" he asked, quietly.

"Matter, father?"

"Yes; something is the matter with you," replied the commandante, in his quiet way.

"Come, tell me what it is. I have noticed that a cloud has been upon your face ever since the ball commenced. You have not yet danced."

"No, nor do I intend to," said Estevan, biting his lip as he spoke.

"And why?"

"Because there is only one woman in this room that I care to dance with."

"That is no reason why you should not dance at all; unless, indeed, the lady be engaged for the whole evening."

"That is the reason exactly," said Estevan, with a bitter laugh; "now can you guess who the lady is?"

"I have only to follow the direction of your eyes and they lead me to her," replied the commandante, with a dry intonation in his voice.

"And you see?"

"Isabel Morena, my ward," said the commandante.

"And my promised wife?" cried Estevan, bitterly; "and yet, to-night, when I sought her hand for the dance, she said in her cold, icy way that she was engaged for the whole of the evening."

"And you?"

"Bowed and left her. The hot passion was swelling in every vein; had I remained by her side, I might have spoken words that afterward I should have regretted."

"Estevan, my son," said the commandante, gently, "you are not proceeding in the right way to gain the love of Isabel. She is a woman—must be humored, flattered. She is beautiful, rich, a gentle and loving girl. She is worth the winning, and yet, like a rash, headstrong boy, you expect the prize to be cast at your feet without an effort on your part to secure it. You know as well as I, that Isabel does not love you; she has given her promise to become your wife, simply because I desired her to do so. The pledge is not an act of obedience, not of love. But as yet, she is heart free. She has never seen the man whom every pulse of her being pronounced to be her master. Why should you not win her love? You are young, a dashing soldier of tried courage, and above all, you have her promise to be your wife. Tush!" cried the father, impatiently; "at this age, boy, when passion's fires ran riot in my heart, and the blood leaped lightly in my veins, the woman that I loved—as you love this one—I would have won from a thousand rivals."

"But, she does not love me."

"And she does not love anybody else; therefore, thy chance is good."

"But to seek her surrounded by this throng, all worshipers at the shrine of her beauty, cuts me to the heart!" exclaimed Estevan, passionately.

"The ice that you complain of, seemingly freezes you alone," said the commandante, quietly; "but who are yonder strangers? their faces are new to me."

Estevan looked in the direction indicated by his father.

He beheld two young men with bronzed faces and a sailor-like air.

"Two friends of Senor Garcia, the merchant," Estevan replied.

"What a strange face the shorter of the two has; the sun has bronzed it almost to the color of the Indian."

"They are two Americans from New Orleans. I heard Garcia speak of them to-day," Estevan said.

The eyes of the commandante were fixed searchingly upon the bronzed face of the dark-skinned stranger. A puzzled look appeared upon his features. He passed his hand slowly across his forehead as though by the act he would recall memories of the past.

"His face is very familiar to me," the commandante said, slowly.

Estevan looked at his father in wonder. The expression upon his face puzzled him.

"Do you know the American?" he asked.

"Yes and no," the father said, with a moody air; "the face is not strange to me, and yet, I do not think that I ever looked upon it before. It recalls bitter memories of years long gone; hours of danger and of suffering rise before me from the dim vista of the past. It can not be possible that this stranger figured in the scenes that occurred long ago, for he is young; but his face stirs up strange recollections."

"If I remember right, Garcia said that it was the American's first visit to our city."

"I am a fool to let his face affect me so. It is but a fancy, nothing more," the commandante said, striving to cast aside the gloomy thoughts that had so suddenly oppressed him.

Leaving Don Carlos and his son in busy conversation, we will turn our attention to the two strangers—the Americans from New Orleans—who were conversing with the young Spanish merchant, Don Garcia.

The taller of the two was a stalwart but ungainly built Yankee from the town of Salem, Massachusetts, a broad-shouldered, powerful-limbed man, with a face as hard, angular and weather-beaten, as though it had been cut out of a pine stump. His sandy hair was cut quite short, except where two long locks curled down in front of his ears. The shrewd gray eyes twinkled with a cunning expression above the high cheekbones. Decius Andrews—so he was called—was not a handsome man, but honesty and truth were plainly written in every line of his rugged features. In years, he had probably seen thirty-five; and for his occupation, a glance at his storm-tanned features and the rolling galls would have easily told that he was a sailor; one who snatched his fortune from the heaving billows and the roaring gale.

His companion was a man of thirty, not quite so tall as Andrews, but superbly formed. Strength and grace were in every limb; the power of a giant, the suppleness of a snake combined. The muscles of his body—now hid by the garb of civilization—the victor of the Grecian Games might have envied. The exquisite cast of his head and neck would have shamed the fallen beauty of Apollo. Hair, black as the raven's wing, curled in tangled masses about his temples, and strayed, carelessly, down his neck, meeting the broad white collar. His eyes were black, large and piercing, full of fire, yet at times, soft in their lustrous tenderness. His forehead was high and broad, his nose straight, the chin square and firm, and the full mouth, which betrayed just a hint of sensual fire, told of an indomitable will. The face of the stranger would have attracted attention in a crowd; the more so that his color was almost as dark as the hue of the sea and sky. It was plain that it was not the effect of the sun alone that had bronzed his features, for his hands were of the same color, and if we should roll up the coat-sleeve, 'twould be to reveal an arm, tinted like the face and hand. The bronzing was Nature's handiwork—not the kiss of sun and wind.

This man was called Rupert Vane.

Vane and Andrews were fast friends.

Garcia, a young Spaniard with dark hair and eyes, and a frank and honest face, was pointing out to the two the notabilities of the ball-room.

"Who's those two chaps yonder, covered all over with gold lace, looking poofy as a butterfly in June?" asked Andrews, indicating the commandante, Don Carlos, and his son, Estevan, as he spoke.

"That is the commandante of Pensacola, Don Carlos Alvarado, and his son, Captain Estevan," Garcia replied.

Carelessly Vane turned his head, and his glance fell upon the two. A moment he gazed, a strange expression upon his face.

Both Andrews and Garcia noticed the look of bewilderment.

Mechanically Rupert passed his hand across his brow, pushing back the shining curls that clustered over his bronzed forehead, as though the may baffled thought.

"What's the matter, Vane?" asked Andrews, in wonder.

"I do not know," replied the sailor, absently. "The sight of that man's face affects me strangely."

"Do you know the commandante?" Garcia asked.

"No; this is the first time that I have ever looked upon him, and yet his face calls up memories of my childhood, of years long gone by. I can not understand it."

"Why, you are a North American!" Garcia said.

"Of course, from the good old Plymouth Rock State, where they have the poetical gals and the biggest pumpkin-pies of anywhere this side of creation!" Andrews cried, enthusiastically.

"I can not understand the emotion that comes over me when I look upon that man's face," Vane said, with his eyes still fixed upon the noble face of the aged Spaniard.

"If you don't know him, and haven't never seen him afore, why in thunder should his face trouble you?"

"That I can not tell; it is a mystery even to me," Vane replied. "His face recalls events that happened when I was but a child. They rise before me as plain as though it was but yesterday they happened. I have not thought of them for years."

"It is very strange," Garcia said.

"Yes, I can not account for it," Vane replied, with a troubled smile on his dark face.

"The commandante is a worthy gentleman," Garcia observed. "I can not say as much for his son, Captain Estevan. He is one of the wildest young men in our city; thinks more of the gaming-table and the wine-bottle than he does of any thing else. He is to marry that beautiful girl yonder, Senorita Isabel, his father's ward."

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MEDAL.

A PECULIAR look appeared on the dark features of Rupert as he heard the name of Isabel, and a quick, passionate flash shot from his dark eyes.

The look was unseen by his companions, who had turned to gaze at the lady.

Andrews could not repress an exclamation of delight as his eyes fell upon the beautiful, child-like face of the girl who bore the name of Isabel Morena, and was the promised wife of Captain Estevan.

"Jerusalem crickets!" Andrews cried, with a low whistle, indicative of great astonishment; "she ain't a woman—she's a picture!"

"Yes, she is beautiful," Garcia said, in admiration.

Rupert Vane spoke not, but his eyes kindled; his bronzed cheek burned, and his heart within his breast throbbled quicker as he looked upon the peerless beauty.

In person, Isabel Morena was about the medium height, of slender build and exquisite form. All the grace of the swaying willow was in every motion. Her complexion was as fair as Parian marble; her tresses gleamed like molten gold in the sunlight; her eyes, a heavenly blue, seemed too pure for one of earthly mold. The face of Isabel Morena was the face of the Madonna, that face of rare beauty that the great masters—the painters whose works will outlive all ages—were so fond of depicting upon their canvases. It was a face to love, to idolize!

It was not strange that the face of the beautiful girl should produce such an effect upon the two Americans.

"What do you think, Rupert?" said Andrews.

"Ain't she a little ahead of any thing this side of sunrise, eh? Oh, dough! she's enough to make a feller speak right out in needin' it!"

"She is a very beautiful girl," Rupert replied, quietly, but there was a sonorous ring in his deep voice that did not escape the quick ear of his friend.

"I'll give you an introduction if you like," said Garcia.

"Like!" cried Andrews, quickly; "I'd walk ten miles through the biggest snow-banks you ever did see for the pleasure of making the acquaintance of such a petticoated angel as this gal is!"

"I'll ask her permission to present two of my friends," Garcia said; "there will be no difficulty about it; she is very amiable; as good as she looks."

"She looks sweeter than a bucket of maple-sap!" Andrews exclaimed, earnestly.

Garcia laughed, and leaving the two, proceeded to make his way through the throng to where the beautiful girl stood, surrounded by a little group of admirers.

Andrews watched Rupert for a moment.

The young sailor had his eyes intently fixed upon the face of Isabel. His chest was heaving and his breath came thick and fast. He seemed unconscious to all else but the beautiful face that his eyes were feasting upon.

Andrews touched him lightly on the arm.

Rupert turned with a sudden start. The spell was broken.

"Ain't she a beauty?"

"She is more than that; she is an angel!" Rupert replied.

"Kinder plin it on, ain't yer?" said Andrews, laughing.

"Did you ever see a more beautiful girl?"

"Guess I never did. She beats our Salem gals all hollow, and I tell you, New England gals are hard to beat," Andrews replied.

"You are right; on this earth there does not live a more beautiful girl than Isabel Morena," said Rupert, impulsively.

"Well, now, you are plin it on! Struck all of a heap, eh?" Andrews asked, with a grin of good-humor. "Got her name, too, pat; I couldn't say, 'nother flapjack' any easier."

"That is not wonderful. Her name has been ringing in my ears for fifteen years."

"How?" asked Andrews, in astonishment.

"Yes, for fifteen years, waking or sleeping, her name has been ever with me. The howling wind has borne it to my ears when, on the storm-tossed waters, it has ripped the canvas from the spars. On the white iceberg, gliding, specter-like, by our dancing vessel, in the pale moonlight off stormy Labrador, I have read her name. And then, amid the carnage of the sea-fight, when the round-shot of the foe rattled through our cordage and drenched our decks with blood, I've heard her name whispered in the wild, dole of the passing ball. I have lived but for one thing, and that is to call yon beautiful girl mine, and mine only."

Andrews was thoroughly astonished.

"Sancho! how in thunder did you know any thing about this girl?"

"That is a secret that I can not reveal even to you, old friend," replied Rupert, taking the rough hand of Andrews within his own and pressing it kindly.

"Then you knew that this gal was here afore you come?" Andrews asked, in amazement.

"Yes," Rupert replied; "it is Isabel Morena that has brought Rupert Vane to Pensacola."

"And you're goin' to make love to the gal?"

"Yes."

"Thunder! didn't you hear Don Garcia say that she was going to marry that young son of a sea-cook over there?" Andrews was referring to Estevan.

"Yes, I heard him," Rupert replied, quickly.

"Well, you can't both have her."

"That is true; but, if Isabel loves me, I'll win her in spite of all the Spaniards in Pensacola!"

"Thunder! but do you s'pose you stand any chance to win the gal?"

"If I did not think so, I should not try."

"Well, this beats Sancho!" muttered Andrews, perplexed. "You have been here before."

"What makes you think so?"

"Well, I kinder had a suspicion of it afore, 'cos you knew the lay of the land so well. Why, you took the brigantine into the harbor in the dark almost—for there was precious little moonlight—and never touched rock or shoal. Then the hiding-place that you selected for our craft: why, a feller would almost have to climb over the brigantine afore he could find her. And now that I find that you know this she angel, I'm nat'rally sure that you ain't a stranger in these parts."

"Perhaps so, and perhaps not," said Rupert, with an evasive smile.

"But, I say!" cried Andrews, suddenly, "this gorgeous chap over there may interfere with your plans. If the girl has promised to marry him, he'll be apt to make some trouble, and as he's the son of the commandante—he's head-cook and bottle-washer round here—you may be worried a little."

If the girl loves me and consents to go with me, I'll have her if I have to run the brigantine up the harbor and risk a fight with the fort. The British cruisers haven't named me Red Rupert for nothing. A hundred brave men follow my lead, Andrews; enough force to lay the city of Pensacola in ashes, if it dispute my passage with the girl I love," said the sailor, in a low tone, but with blazing eyes.

"I shouldn't like any thing better than a fight with the Dons!" exclaimed Andrews, rubbing his hands in glee.

"I do not expect to win the girl without a struggle," Rupert said, thoughtfully.

"But, at present, I have a great advantage,

But one person alone will suspect my mission here—that I come to win a bride—and even that person will not guess that a well-armed vessel and a hundred men are at my back."

"But who in thunder will guess the object that brings you here?" asked Andrews, in wonder.

"The woman that I seek!"

"What? the gal, herself, suspect that you are after her?"

"Yes."

"Look here! I'm gettin' all mixed up!" cried Andrews, bothered. "You don't know the gal, yet she is to know that you're here arter her and— Well, this beats Sancho!"

"You shall know all in time," Rupert said, with a quiet smile. "I do not think that my plans can fail. The very boldness of my attempt will command success."

The return of Garcia put an end to the conversation.

Follow me, seniors, and you shall have your introduction," the Spaniard said.

The three proceeded across the room.

The little group gathered around Isabel scattered and made way for the three.

Garcia, in due form, presented the two strangers.

When Isabel's eyes rested upon the dark face of the sailor, Rupert Vane, a look of inquiry appeared upon her fair features. She seemed as if she was striving to recall memories of the past.

"You are strangers to our city?" Isabel asked, with a sweet smile, directing her conversation to Rupert, but as he did not answer, Andrews did, after a moment's pause.

"Yes, senorita," he said.

"Will you stay long in Pensacola?" she asked, putting the question again to Rupert.

Aspelled seemed on the tongue of the sailor, for, as before, he did not answer, but turned with a questioning air to Andrews.

"I do not think that we shall make a very long stay," Andrews answered, puzzled that Rupert did not reply.

The look that appeared on the face of Isabel showed that she was disappointed in not hearing the voice of Rupert.

A moment she remains silent, her eyes fixed upon the ground as if she was deep in thought. Then a bright smile illumined her face. She rose to her feet.

"How warm it is here," she said, half-petulant. "Senor, will you not volunteer to give me your arm and escort me to the piazza?" She addressed her speech directly to Rupert. Her quick glance detected the gleam of joy that flashed from his eyes as he offered his arm, but still he spoke not.

"Excuse me, seniors," she said, as, leaning lightly upon the strong arm of the sailor, she moved away.

"If she ain't an angel, I'm a grasshopper!" exclaimed Andrews, emphatically.

As the sailor and Isabel passed through the throng and disappeared in the doorway that led to the piazza, two pair of eyes noted them.

The eyes belonged to the commandante and his son.

"Father, did you notice Isabel?" cried Estevan, white with rage. "Arm in arm with this stranger, and she refused my escort!"

"All women have their whims," said the commandante, calmly. "You are too hasty; patience! You have Isabel's promise to become your wife, and with that promise to aid you, it is your own fault if you can not win her love."

"I will follow your counsel," and Estevan moved slowly away. The commandante gazed after him with a sad smile.

"Hasty and quick-tempered!" he murmured. "In him I see myself, twenty-five years ago. It is odd that the face of that dark stranger should call back the past so vividly; that past that I have vainly striven to forget."

With gloomy thoughts the commandante walked slowly toward the door that gave entrance to the ball-room.

His eyes fixed upon the floor caught sight of something that glistened like a coin. He stooped and picked it up.

It was a small silver medal, with a strange device.

The eyes of the commandante started with horror as he gazed upon it; a stifled moan of anguish came from his lips.

"That terrible figure! it is an omen of evil to me and mine," he murmured.

The silver medal bore the image of a winged whale!

"STRAWS"

We are in receipt of so many letters congratulatory that it is difficult to make selections from them for quotation. The following, from a city reader, who evidently knows both how to write and how to think for himself, is a straw:

Messrs. BEADLE & Co.:

Gentlemen—I have taken your SATURDAY STAR JOURNAL for nearly one year, and I find it to be a better paper than all the weeklies put together. Its print is larger and a great deal better than any paper I know of for six cents, and I would take it for the price was ten cents. Altogether, it is THE paper, and decidedly the BEST.

Yours truly,

"A CONSTANT READER."

A gentleman of taste, and a popular story-writer, in a late note says: "I heard from my mother the other day. A portion of what she said was: 'I am sorry I can not read your stories in the ————; the print hurts my eyes too much. But I read every line in the SATURDAY JOURNAL, and for other reasons than that you write for it. I love its large, clear type, and its excellent matter.'"

"Will Frost"—whose query regarding the story of the "Blackfoot Queen," is answered elsewhere—says: "I think the SATURDAY JOURNAL the best paper printed. I have a right to judge, for I take the Ledger, the N. Y. Weekly, Friends Companion and Saturday Night, and of them all like the JOURNAL best. I read all that is in the JOURNAL, but not more than one or two of the stories in the others. You have my very best wishes for your future."

Expansion of the Lungs.—Many inventions have been sought out for expanding the lungs; but the following simple means will accomplish the work as well as it can be possibly done. Go into the air, stand erect, throw back the head and shoulders, and draw the air through the nostrils into the lungs as much as possible. After having thus filled the lungs, raise your arms, still extended, and suck in the air. When you have thus forced the arms backward, with the chest open, change the process by which you drew in your breath, fill the lungs are emptied. Go through this process several times a day and it will enlarge the chest, give the lungs better play, and serve very much to ward off consumption.

If the lungs are tender, or the blood-vessels weak, due care must be used, at first, not to overstrain them.

I LOVED THEE!

BY C. F. S.

I loved thee right to madness—
All in vain!
Oh! while I breathe, I shall ne'er
Love again!

Thou saw'st how well I lov'd thee,
Alas, too well!
But thought thou'dst hear my vow, then
Say farewell!

When first I came to woo thee,
Too gladly!
Thou should'st have scorned me, 'ere I
Lov'd madly.

If thou did'st love him better—
Why, oh, why
Did'st thou receive my kisses?

If the future proves him false,
(Or a bore),
Fly not to me for love—I'll
Love no more!

The flowers fair thou gav'st me,
I return;
Thy ringlet in my prayer-book
Now I burn.

Of the many rhymes I wrote thee—
All are lies;
Who said, "a man can flatter
If he tries?"

Ah! well! thou know'st who wrote it,
Faithless epistle!
Cold lips thine which often err'd,
Once were right.

I loved thee near to madness—
But in vain!
Oh! while I breathe, I shall ne'er
Love again!

The Avenging Angels:

OR,

THE BANDIT BROTHERS OF THE SCIO TO.
A BORDER AND INDIAN TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SILENT HUNTER," "QUEEN OF THE WOODS," E

The canoe was now lifted, carried over a spit of land, and once more put down into the water—but not the water of the main channel. They had entered the bayou.

This branch was here so closely bordered by trees, that, being narrow, they arched overhead, and made such darkness that many a time and oft an owl had flown about hooting, thinking it was night.

"The Injine is right," said Steve, in that deep whisper which all who tread such dangerous ground become used to; "the Injine is right. We shall certainly reach the farm this way slicker than 't'other. So in with you; that tug up the O-hier has taken a considerable streak of daylight from us."

Kenewa lifted one finger to his lips, and motioned for the most complete silence.

As he did so, a low murmur of voices became distinctly audible. It came from the place where they had landed.

Fortunately the path they had taken was over the rock, where, the sun being warm, but little trail would be left. Still it would not long be possible to blind the eyes of the Indians.

"Go!" whispered Kenewa. "If my brothers see me not soon at the Falls, my scalp will have been taken."

Not a word more was spoken. These leave-takings in the mighty forest were too common to excite experienced men, while to hold discussion with an Indian under such circumstances was pure folly. Kenewa had made up his mind.

The canoe was re-entered. Roland was placed forward as a scout, and the three adventurers advanced on their way. The scenery at once changed. Again the charming prairie valleys came in view, where lowing wild cattle rested, and where the wolf sneaked, howling through the livelong night; gurgling brooks added their quota to increase the general streams, and tiny silent bayous noiselessly performed the same office.

The sun by this time touched the edge of the mystic horizon, swollen to treble its usual size, and was blending the dark and clear line of the distant plains with the clouds; but presently the separation was clearly marked by a dim streak of blue across the blood-red disk of the great luminary.

Then all was night.

And still they sped onward, and the canoe glided into darkness as a dull, heavy sound fell upon their ears. The sound of hurrying waters.

Roland waved to his companion to check the progress of the boat, pointing as he did so upward.

"What is that yonder, upright, behind that bush?" he asked.

Steve gave vent to a laugh that shook the boat, but made no other noise, ere he replied:

"A reptile," he whispered. "I didn't think the captain had a twigged him, but he's on the wrong side of the river. The devils of Shawnees have smoked our errand. To'war side's whar the Huron was to be. Now what ter do?"

"Canoe under tree," said the low, hushed voice of the young chief, from amid the dark belt that lined the shore.

His orders were obeyed without hesitation; the whole party landed, the canoe was forced into a kind of pool, and then all crouched down to hear the Indian's report.

The party of Shawnees below, five in number, having satisfied themselves that a canoe had gone up the bayou in the direction of Judge Mason's—had determined to follow them by wading up the shallow stream. They were in no hurry, for the rest of the warriors, who seemed intuitively to guess the object of the young man's journey, were ambushed at the Falls, where the fugitives were expected to make a portage.

Kenewa had at once taken a short cut to the spot where he had met his friends, and there waited to apprise them of their danger.

In low, hushed tones a council was held. Roland's first thought was to reach the goal of his journey, which, by the river, was ten, by the forest five miles. All seemed, except Kenewa, who made no remark, equally desirous to proceed.

"And you?" asked Roland of the Huron.

"My three white brothers have decided," he said, simply; "let no one speak more."

The words had scarcely passed his lips when they heard the upward party of the foe splashing in the water close to the bank of the stream, where it was too shallow to float a huge war-canoe.

All clutched their rifles, all held their breath—a wall of green not four feet thick separated them from their fierce and relentless enemies.

The Shawnee band, composed of young and inexperienced warriors, uncontrolled by the presence of a chief, advanced, scarcely looking to the right or left, until they stood exactly opposite the hiding-place of the fugitives.

A glitter of the eye, a compression of the lip, nothing more, and the four gallant fellows understood one another.

But they soon understood the reason which had induced the braves to halt. They had caught sight of their own crouching sentry on the right bank, and they knew that the canoe had not been captured. Where then could it be? With sudden gravity the young men decided on advancing and conferring with their elders, when a regular search of the two banks would explain the mystery.

This decided on, they hurried up-stream.

"Je—rusalem!" hissed Steve, between his teeth. "That was a considerable light show!"

"Tongue no made to talk," said Kenewa, dryly. "Come."

All involuntarily gave way to the Huron, as their recognized leader. In dangers of this kind, when men are neither foolishly nor ignorant, the most experienced and trustworthy man at once moves to the front, as it was now. All had confidence in the Indian, and though he struck almost a backward trail and left the canoe to its fate, not a word of remonstrance was made, not a sign of hesitation discovered.

The belt of forest was soon cleared, and then, keeping within the dark and gloomy shadows, Kenewa led the way up-stream in a direction that must soon bring them on a level with the "Falls."

Then he suddenly halted, and the whole party concealing their guns, lest the faint glint of rising moonlight should fall upon the barrels, peered out in the direction indicated by Kenewa.

Twenty painted warriors, naked to the waist, armed and in their war-paint, were entering the stream.

No one moved, no one spoke, not an eye but watched that band of bloodthirsty red-men with the deepest interest—the Huron with half-contemptuous hatred.

They divided themselves into two bands,

and as they advanced were seen to light torches, with which to explore the shore. This would certainly enable them to spy out the canoe, which would set the whole raging party on their trail.

As soon as the last Indian had entered the water, Kenewa fell into a slow trot across "the open," having first selected a gentle kind of a ridge as a shelter behind which to advance in safety. His companions silently followed, and in ten minutes more they were at the bottom of the "Falls," where the murmuring bayou fell over black rocks into the pool below.

A fearful yell rising on the night air from below now startled all the party.

"Found canoe," said Kenewa, quietly entering the stream, which, among the rocks, where the water glittered and shone in the silvery moonlight, was everywhere fordable, with care.

Again his companions obeyed, and in a remarkably short space of time all were on the opposite bank, and taking their way along the narrow natural pathway beside the rapids, that served from time immemorial as a portage.

Kenewa still was guide, and now, fearless of ambushes, he strode erect and manly, with his gun across the hollow of his left arm.

Suddenly, as if he had been shot, he fell to the ground, imitated by his companions, who knew that this act of his portended serious danger.

"Gun—rifle—shine in rocks," said Kenewa, in a low whisper, pointing to a kind of rampant fifty feet ahead, where they could, perhaps, have held their own against a hundred Shawnees.

"I'll be darned if you ain't right," replied Steve, with a deep sigh; "we've got into a purty hornets' nest."

"Hist!" continued Kenewa, crawling to the cover of some bushes. In time, for from the opposite bank came a flight of arrows, while along the path below came a dozen Indians, bent on slaughter.

They, too, when their friends shot, would have sought cover, but the murderous crack of four guns was heard, and four of the howling red-skins paid the penalty in life and limb for their incautious exposure.

Scarcely had the echoes of these shots died away, and while yet all was still, two cracks of the heavy western rifle were heard above, and as many of the bowmen bit the dust at the feet of their comrades.

None hesitated of the fugitives. They knew now who must be above, and hurried, after a word or two exchanged, to join them.

It is a question who was most surprised, the two young Masons to meet Roland Edwards, or Roland Edwards to meet the two young Masons.

"Good news!" said our hero, wringing their hands, and that is all that passed on their private affairs.

"I say strike for Masonville," then added Roland, "at once; if pursued we are more than a match for these ruffians."

"Good—Masonville," said the Indian, who stood on a high rock overlooking the forest, "much shoot down—log but burn."

All clambered up beside him, and truly, in the direction of the farm they could see smoke and sparks.

"Good heavens!" cried the elder son, "the Indians have attacked the house and fired it! Come!"

"Not go—kill," said the Indian, checking him; "follow Kenewa."

Away! away! through the tangled forest; under the gnarled oak they go; under the oak, the elm, and maple, by a winding trail, that, in the darkness of night, none could have followed but a native child of the wilderness.

Away! away! with burning brows, and compressed lips; up slopes, down hills, through valleys, until they come where they can hear the crackling of the flames.

A bottom is between them and the farm, a richly fertile hollow, that soon shall be an orchard, when the war-whoop of the red-man has ceased to be heard in the land.

Down into its gloomy depths they plunge, up the rugged slope, and burst—all together, none would lag for his life—like a thunder-cloud, upon the plain—to see—

The old man bound.

The mother a helpless body on the ground. Ella struggling wildly in the clutches of two ruffians, while three others looked moodily on.

A ringing volley of rifles, a loud shout, and the atmosphere for a moment covered with smoke. It clears away and not one of the enemy is to be seen, until Kenewa pointed them out effecting a junction with the Shawnees on the skirt of the forest.

But little heed was taken for a moment of this alliance between the two bands; their task was first one of mercy.

Of mercy? Oh, heavens! When the old man recovered his senses it was to find his wife dying—his daughter, her clothes torn, her arms bloody, herself cowering in a corner, a stark, staring maniac!

"They will be gone, O Lord! But on these men, mine also!" was his terrible cry.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OATH AT THE GRAVE.

SELDOM did more splendid morning break upon a scene of more utter desolation than that which the Home Farm presented a few hours after the events we have recorded.

The log-house no longer burned, but presented a mass of charred and broken rafters and logs, the picture of desolation and ruin.

Beneath a tent lay the mortal remains of Mrs. Mason, and beside her crouched, helpless as an infant, the poor maniac, but a few hours since one of the most glorious of God's creatures. Tending her with an affectionate earnestness that was pitiable to behold, was Ettie, whose streaming eyes, trembling lips, and convulsed frame sufficiently showed the agony she had endured and still suffered.

Martha moved about silently and stealthily. She began to have a faint suspicion of the evil she had done in speaking to an utter stranger; for, from a few words she had gathered, she now suspected that he was the author of this fearful outrage.

The old man slept. Agony, exhaustion, suffering had taken peculiar effect upon him, and had sent him off into one of those deep and dreamless slumbers which are akin to death.

A little further off stood a group: the actors of the previous night, and two stout, hearty farm laborers. These men, who, from their lowly position, were not fit game for the bandits, had been secured within their own huts previous to the attack on the log.

Roland Edwards, said Henry, the elder son, "you have come at a sad time, and I fear me your good news will avail but little. Still, your explanation gives you a right to

be here. There is my hand; in future we are brothers.

"The same here," cried James; and the three young men wrung one another's hand.

"Michel," then said the elder son, in a voice of deep solemnity, "bring along the spade and mattocks, that we may dig our mother's grave." And the brave fellow dashed away the scalding tears which no stoical effort could restrain.

All followed to the spot they had selected, which was by a seat under a tree, where in life she had loved to sit.

A tall cedar waved gracefully in the wind, a tiny stream rippled softly by, while above, from sunny morn to dewy eve, the feathered choristers would sing over her lonely grave.

No one offered to lend a hand.

Silent and solemn the youths began their self-allotted task, while the others stood around with lowering brows leaning on their rifles.

"Hold!" suddenly said a solemn voice, and the judge, pale, ghastly, but sterner than ever, stalked into their midst.

"Ah!" he cried, as his eyes fell upon Roland, "this wretch here! How dare he—"

The sons took each a hand of the youth. "Father," said Henry, gently, "by the memory of our sainted mother, I say we have wronged Roland. There is no time for explanations. All is well, and you are a richer man than ever."

"Rich!" cried the old man, with a haggard look, as he gladly folded Roland to his bosom. "Rich! who will avails it? Will riches give back my wife? Will riches restore reason to my child—my child, Roland, your wife, that was to be?—but never, never! Well, well, Roland, I'm glad to see you, very glad to see you. Now what are you doing, boys?"

They held up their heads.

"Ashamed, boys? No; dig, dig, dig! for the mother that bore you; she brought you into the world, and 'tis but fair you should see her out of it."

And the judge turned away with a laugh that made all the listeners' blood curdle in their veins.

It was a bright, sunny morn, and the trees waved gently and softly, and the birds caroled cheerily in the heavens, and nature in her richest hue lay mantling in all her gorgeous splendor before them, as, their hearts too full for speech, these two brave boys dug their mother's grave.

Steve and Kenewa, ever alive to their duties as scouts, were outlying in the forest on the watch for the murderous white ruffians and their red-skin associates.

At last the task was over, and the young men came up from the pit.

Judge Mason sat upon a bench outside the tent, silent, motionless, with dark and lowering brow, his eyes were fixed upon the sheet which covered the corpse.

Of all the old man's wealth, of all his vast possessions, better than gold, jewels or precious stones, was that senseless clay from which the mystic soul had departed, and which was now fit only to be returned to earth—dust to dust, ashes to ashes.

Martha glided ghost-like into the tent and whispered to Ettie.

With a bowed head and breaking heart she rose, took Ella by the arm, who obeyed her as a child, and led her forth a little way from the grave.

Then came Henry, James and Roland, with Tom as fourth, with a rude litter to take her away.

The old man roused himself and looked round.

"Already," he said, feebly, "already. Would you shut her out from me now? Wait another day—one day, my children. Thirty years have we lived in the valley of the shadow of death; thirty years, my boys, together, without a word of unkindness, and I would not part so suddenly."

"Father," said Henry, sternly, "we have other duties to perform; we have now to bury the dead, and then—"

"What, my son?"

"To avenge her."

The old man rose as if sudden life had been put into him.

"Yes! yes!" he whispered, "yes; you are right, boys."

And then he stooped, uncovered the face, kissed the cold and clammy lips, gazed earnestly and fondly at the pale, wan features, and once more returned the sheet to its place.

"I shall never forget her," he said, plaintively, and then tenderly, as if she had been a suffering babe, he lifted her from the ground, and placed her on the rude bier, which the bearers at once lifted, and then moved forward slowly and reverently.

The grave was soon reached, and a few words of service read by Roland, after which all that was mortal of the judge's wife was deposited in the grave, which the sons then proceeded to fill up.

Then the old man called the whole party around him.

"My friends, yesterday I had a happy home, to-day I am homeless; yesterday I had a wife, to-day I am a widower; yesterday I had two blooming daughters, to-day I have but one; the other has during the horrors of that fearful night, lost her reason. Well? Who has been the cause of this? Know you?—do you guess?"

None could say.

"The five bandits of the Scioto, who, driven from the settlement for their crimes, have cast their lot in the wilderness, and yesterday, having discovered my abode, caused this desolation."

All clutched their rifles, while the dark and lowering brows betokened the universal fate to which all present sent them in their own minds.

"Were we ruffians hunted of the law I would have these ruffians hunted down and punished by outraged society; but here the law can not reach them. Still, I am a magistrate, and here, speaking over the grave of my murdered wife, I doom these men to death; and I vow never to rebuild my ruined homestead until I have hunted them all down, and taken their lives in just retribution for their fearful crimes. All who love me, all who respect me, all who owe me obedience, must join; we will form a band, and each man who enters the association must give, whenever called upon, aid to pursue these fiends in human shape."

Without waiting for the judge to finish, every man lifted his hand, and took the most solemn vow that they could think of.

"My life, my fortune, my whole future career in life," said Roland Edwards, "lies shipwrecked there;" and he pointed to where Ettie was tending the poor and unconscious elder sister. "And I should die easy if I knew that I had left one of these villains to cumber the earth."

All answered, "Amen!"

We are united: a band of men to do justice upon assassins and murderers," he

continued; "and while associated we should be known by a distinctive name. I propose that we call ourselves the Avenging Angels, and dissolve only when justice shall have been done."

"Well spoken, my son," said the judge, shaking him by the hand. It shall be so! and I, as the oldest man here, at once nominate you the captain. Next to me you have most to avenge."

"I accept," replied Roland; "and now for our plans. I have spoken with Kenewa, who declares that ere night we shall be attacked by these villains, reinforced by a large party of Shawnees. He proposes, therefore, that we place ourselves in a position to defend ourselves with success against them. Kenewa has revealed to me a secret, such as never before did Indian reveal to white man—the secret of the Pilot Rock. He says he can take us to a place of refuge where, if besieged by the whole Shawnee tribe, with a hundred white men to back them, we should be able to hold our own."

"I thank Kenewa," said the judge; "I thank him from my heart. When shall we start?"

"We have thirty miles to ride, chiefly over a stony ground. The sooner we start the better."

"To horse," cried the judge.

The dependents of the judge had some time previously brought up the whole of the horses connected with the establishment, which were more than sufficient to mount all.

Silently and quietly all took their seats in the saddle, and prepared for the journey. Poor Ella herself, a splendid and bold horse-woman, mechanically took the reins.

All were ready.

"Ride forward," said the judge.

The whole party, with the women in their midst, slowly took their way toward the skirt of the forest.

The judge then knelt down upon his wife's grave, and with his face in his hands remained ten minutes motionless.

What of agony, what of sorrow, what of events present, and to come, passed through his brain in that short period, rests with himself and his God. He never spoke of her again.

There is no parting in this world, no agony conceivable, to be compared to the separation on earth of a true husband and wife. Their love is the love of loves which no silly school-girl or sentimental boy can understand or appreciate.

A more silent, solemn cavalcade than that which passed, a quarter of an hour later, beneath the green arches, never, perhaps, trod the leaf-sown soil of an American forest.

No one spoke.

Kenewa, mounted on a stout and sturdy nag, rode in the van as guide. No one kept near him. They simply took care to keep him in sight, he agreeing to give them full warning by a sign, if it became necessary for them to secrete themselves.

The young Huron warrior well knew the Shawnees were only waiting for a favorable opportunity to attack them. He reasoned, in his remarks to Roland Edwards, to whom, as leader of the band, he looked for orders, that what saved them from previous assault was the time consumed by the Five Robbers of the Scioto in making terms with the Shawnees, who, true to their Indian characteristics, would not make a bargain without a preliminary smoking of calumets.

It was a sight to see Kenewa, as, astride upon his horse, he walked the sturdy animal slowly under the trees, looking, to an ordinary observer, as unconcerned as if the woods concealed nothing treacherous or dangerous. But to any one who knew him, to any one who understood the keen craft and subtle cunning of his Indian nature, his observant eye would have been seen to take in every detail, however faint, of what might pass under his glance.

The flight of a bird, the falling of a leaf, the rustling of bushes under the influence of the wind, were seen by him and heard.

At last they came to a spot where the forest began to be thinner, and the soil more stony and ragged.

At the end of the kind of forest glade was a green mound of earth, with here and there a bush or two.

Before entering on this rude clearing Kenewa reined in his steed, and signing to the others to stand still, dismounted, tied his horse, and crept under bushes and trees, until he was lost to the sight of his anxious and observant friends.

In five minutes he reappeared, with a grave and stately mien, and signed to the whole party to come up, placing his finger on his lips by way of warning.

The Avengers, leaving Ettie to keep Ella quiet, rode forward with their hands upon their rifles. All were prepared for action.

Kenewa pointed to the mound.

"Shawnee—white Indian there—council meeting—great smoke—long-knives much run—stiff from wounds."

"Well," said Roland, "what do you advise?"

"Shawnee warriors six times as many as us. If girls away, fight; Kenewa advises now, run."

"Run!—where?"

"Straight as an arrow for Pilot Rock; there fight."

"Forward!"

Beyond the mound of green where the Shawnee camp lies," said Kenewa, "is a stony plain; not a blade of grass has ever grown there since the great Manitou gave being to man. Let the horses have water ere we start."

"Water!" cried Roland, "where are we to get water?"

The Indian looked at him with amazement. To his untutored and unsophisticated mind the idea of starting on such a journey without a proper supply of an article so necessary was simply so absurd, that he would have felt it to be an insult to have suggested it.

"Have the pale-faces no thought? Do they trust to the dew of heaven that they bring no water?"

"What is to be done?"

"The horses must die, that the pale-faces may be revenged. Kenewa has water for the women."

And he held up his gourd.

Roland pressed the noble young Huron's hand. They thoroughly understood one another. Both were noble natures, and both would have done credit to any society amid which they had been born.

The girls had been brought up, and then, at a signal from Kenewa, the horses were put upon their mettle and urged across the arid forest glade at their topmost speed. The position of things was so critical as to depend upon the mere measurement of a certain space of ground.

The opening was three-quarters of a mile

across, the Shawnees' camp about five hundred yards distant. Had the Shawnees and their new allies been prepared for what was about to happen, there could not have been the slightest chance for the Avengers.

All depended on the surprise.

Roland, mounted on Black Ella, could in a moment have distanced any of the others, and this he knew. To avoid doing so he was compelled strongly to curb his steed. While the others were using whip and spur in order to urge their animals to the utmost extent of their strength, the captain of the Avengers had to hold a tight rein upon his animal.

He kept to the left of the column, exactly on the same level with Ettie and Ella, who rode side by side, the first pale and yet tearless, the latter with a proud smile upon her handsome but sullen face.

No sooner did they burst, like a storm-cloud, on the prairie, than the Shawnees and the bandits rose with a wild and savage yell, and made a rush at their horses. There could not have been less than a hundred of them altogether, some armed with guns, some with bows, some with tomahawks, but all maddened with drink.

For months it had been noticed on the Ohio that many flatboats which descended the river never reached their destinations, and in no case where a flatboat or scow was missing was a trace ever found of the crew. The boats were found sometimes sunk in shoal water, in other places burned, the charred wreck taken up some creek or bayou, and the contents scattered about.

In every instance every keg of spirits was removed, so that there must have been human agency at work.

The authors of these infamies were the Bandit Brothers of the Scioto.

To win over the Shawnees to their interests they had opened up their whisky and rum store, and were, when surprised, just in the height of their revel. Unfortunately for the Avengers, they had not advanced sufficiently with their orgie to be incapable of action; had it been so, the aim of Roland's party might have been carried out there and then.

But as it was, the amount of drink they had taken was only enough to make them ferocious. Uttering the fearful war-cry of the Shawnees—by far the ugliest howl of any of the red-skins on the American continent—they rushed to their horses, followed by the five bandits, who, stiff from their wounds, were not able to hasten with the same rapidity to where their steeds stood.

The Avengers, scarcely glancing at their enemies, but with their eyes fixed upon the Huron guide, turned in the direction he was taking, which was a little oblique from the right track. This he did to avoid a collision.

Suddenly Roland struck his spurs into his horse's sides, and, dashing past everybody, whispered a word to Kenewa. The Indian made no reply, but nodded his head with a quiet smile. The captain at once rode back to where Ella and Ettie were riding side by side.

"Ettie," he said, quietly, "get forward as fast as you can, and follow Kenewa. Wait for nothing."

The young girl made no reply, but obeyed with the docility of a child. She held the reins of her sister's horse in her left hand.

No sooner were his directions followed by the youngest daughter, than Roland drew his rein.

Every man at once pulled up, and at a sign from the young captain turned toward the Shawnees.

The whole force of the enemy at once drew up and prepared their weapons.

"Fire!"—shouted Roland—"run!"

The discharge of rifles was almost simultaneous with the turning round of the whole party, in obedience to the second direction of the captain. Already the girls, in company with Kenewa, had gained half a mile. The Shawnees and the bandits were so taken aback by the sudden volley sent into their midst—a volley which emptied several saddles—that for a moment pursuit was checked.

But no sooner did the Avengers start, after delivering their fire, than again the relentless foe were on their track.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 55.)

THE OLDEST ESTABLISHED Base-Ball Emporium

IN THE UNITED STATES.

E. I. HORSMAN,

THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

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SOON TO APPEAR.

HOODWINKED; OR, DEAD AND ALIVE.

A Physician's and Nobleman's Plot.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "THE WARNING ARROW," "RALPH HANCOCK, THE CHIEF," ETC., ETC.

Foolscap Papers.

The Oracle of the Month.

APRIL.

According to the latest and most approved almanacs this is the fourth month, if you count right from January, and it is usually spelled Ape-er-ile, for short, and for the sake of variety. It is called April from the simple fact that apes are more plentiful during this month than at any other time.

Jammed in as it is between the cold-hearted March and warm-hearted May, its weather is average. When it rains, April is compared to a maiden who weeps because she can't go to the opera on account of having no beam, ideal or real; and when it is sunny it is likened to the same girl who smiles to hear that the performers did not come, and there will be no show.

The gentle deluges descending from the cerulean skies whither they were drawn by the all-absorbing sun, and falling with a lulling murmur and a musical cadence upon the soft, terrestrial surface of the palpitating globe, are very apt to make mud, and the foundations of sidewalks and crossings will be very variable, and after we have spent an hour in blocking our boots, or inveigled a dime darky to undertake the job, and we step out proudly and sink into soft, diluted earth wretchedly, how forcibly are we reminded of the verse, "They who go down into the mud with boots, and do flounder in the great deep," etc., and how foolishly do we think of calling the attention of the city council to the state of the streets, when no councilman has to walk that way, and all is vanity!

April violets are supposed to bloom about this time, according to poets, who also bloom, but I am more inclined to think the violets are inclined to be more prolific in poetry than they are in the woods. By the way, nine out of ten poets who grind out their rhymes, and use such flowery language, can not actually tell a bunch of violets from a bouquet of onions and garlic.

Because as for their botany? It's plain they haven't got any. (Persons with illiterate, but poetical, turns of mind may fail to see anything but a rhyme in the above couplet, but it is like a porous plaster, only needs application.)

The first of April is not our birthday by any means, but it is the day that we get our eyes opened, and occurs in the fore part of this month. How funny it is—to other people—for us to sweep the heavens with an inscrutable gaze, trying to divine somewhere in their azure and unfathomable depths the winged flight of imaginative birds as pointed out to our unseeing eyes by a young man, and leading finger, with more mischief than conscience, and have gently whispered in our harmonious ears these deep-meaning, wide-reaching, uncharitable words, "April fool," and as one good turn deserves another, how does our dignity crushed to earth rise again when we turn round and catch that little, insignificant, philosophically-humorous urchin by the nape of the neck, and dimple his coat tails with the persuasive toe of our boot in the presence of a large crowd of other Aprils? While we turn away, remarking that we are no fools, prefaced by a mill-damn, with the mill burned down, and afterward take a drink, and then going on our way again, another boot-black calls our attention to the fact that we have dropped our handkerchief, and while we turn suddenly to pick it up, change our notion and go and take another drink of wine on a friend's treat out of a delusive glass that won't bleed at any pour, amid many happy returns of the season, etc.

Going home to dinner we vow we won't be fooled any more, and change our notion on taking the first bite of dissembling pie, thinking that, with the early grass, our human natures are also getting remarkably green under the influence of dry jokes, which motion we record when in the evening we dress and go to sup with a family we have no acquaintance with, having received a very pressing and politely false-written invitation.

The fact that Easter occurs during this month will be everybody to laying eggs—in calico. Colored eggs, hard-boiled and laid by imaginary rabbits, will be all the go among the children.

The 15th of April, eighteen hundred and something odd, I went to school all day, or nearly. I began at the foot of my class, and

maintained my position in spite of every thing they could do. Such another case of indomitable energy and perseverance is not to be found in the annals of this world or the world before it.

The 17th day of April is not celebrated for any thing that I know of.

Now, as the weather is getting warm and pleasant, and every thing in nature calls for the beginning of labor, you will find that naps in the daytime go a great deal better than ever you had any idea of.

The days grow longer and the nights grow shorter, and the sun rises sooner, and the little birds singing praises on the trees in front of your window break the rosy bonds of slumber that bind you, and you open your eyes and almost swear.

You will know that the summer is not far off by the bursting of the buds, the springing of the plants, and also by the prevalence of flies in your coffee again.

Your heart experiences as it were a fuller life, touched by the harmonies of awakening nature, and bed-bugs make their appearance.

The warm breezes from the south come balmier blown, and the flies bite with political vigor.

You will discover beauty in every thing you see; likewise cockroaches in your boots when you put them on.

Now is the time to sow your wheat; it is the handiest to sow it in flower-pots, for then you can take them in out of the weather.

If you are tired of this world and want to commit suicide, settle up your affairs and go to spading in your garden.

There are thirty days in this month. If you tell the truth once a day, by the end of the month you will have told just thirty, which will be a remarkable number for some of you, unless you are all dry-goods dealers.

There are four Sundays in this month, so, at the rate of two cents each Sunday, you can put eight cents into the contribution-plate during April, which will be a good deal for many of you.

Yours, with premonitions of ague,
WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

The Great Story of the Year!

THE WINGED WHALE;

OR, THE MYSTERY OF RED RUPERT.

BY MR. ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "HEART OF FIRE," "ACE OF SPADES," "WOLF DEMON," ETC.

In this number we give to our readers the opening chapters of this superb story. It is written in Mr. Aiken's best style, and located in an entirely new field. The plot is excellent and will baffle the guess of the oldest reader.

The Winged Whale, the mysterious demon of the waters that haunts the bay of Pensacola; the terrible form, at the sight of which the bravest men shudder, is a creature which could only have come from the brain that created the "Wolf Demon." Then the love of the dashing sailor, Red Rupert, about whose birth and life there hangs a terrible mystery—for the fair Spanish girl, Isabel, and the schemes of his rival, the Spanish captain, against his life are told with weird grace and power. The nature of the mysterious bond that binds the Spanish Commandante, the old Indian chief and the young sailor together, will puzzle the keenest-eyed reader. Nor is there an element of humor wanting in the story. The shrewd Yankee, Decius Andrews, and the drunken assassin-soldier, Roque Vasca, with his boastful lies, supply that.

THE BOHEMIAN.

In the olden time France was overrun with a strange class of people, known as Bohemians. They were supposed to be natives of Bohemia. They were fortune-tellers, sword-swallowers, dancers, performers of all sorts of strange feats, given generally in the open street to the wondering eyes of the gaping multitude. These outcasts kept themselves, and were looked upon by the people with fear and aversion.

Gradually the name Bohemian began to be applied to adventurers of all nations—to the men or women who had no visible means of support and "lived by their wits," as the saying is.

Soon the name was given to the writers for the press and to the poor artists; in fact to all who had the slightest claim to belong to the world of art. But, as time wore on, the name Bohemian came to be applied more to those who walked in the flowery paths of literature than to those of any other class.

So at the present day, when we hear the remark made of a man that he is a "Bohemian," we take it for granted that he is a writer, and not a very reputable one, either. The old meaning of the word—the man that lives by his wits, and lives badly, too—still clings to it.

The Bohemian of New York is one of the odd characters of the great city. His assurance is his strong point. There isn't any thing in the world but what he thinks he can do—referring, of course, to the world of letters. If the managing editor is sick, the Bohemian feels himself perfectly competent to write his editorial for him. He doesn't object to step into the shoes of the commercial editor, if that gentleman is absent; and, if it should be his good fortune to be called upon to "do" the dramatic column, he is in his glory. The theater, indeed, is his strong point. He is personally acquainted with all the actors and actresses. His ready pen is the august power that makes and unmake public favorites. True, he doesn't often get the chance to favor his friends, or give a "dig" to his enemies, for the true Bohemian is the free lance of literature, and serves regularly under no banner, preferring his "own sweet will" to the dictates of a managing editor; but, when he does get the coveted opportunity, he improves it, too, to the great horror of the unfortunate artist who has neglected to court his acquaintance and ask his favor over a bottle of sparkling champagne, or swell larger for your true Bohemian is not particular, and will condescend to quaff the amber beer if he can not procure the vintage "cliquet." Joy to the keen-eyed son of genius who has descended from the pedestal of art to beg the favor of the worm whose crawling touch soils the marble of the column. A quarter column of unstinted praise pays for the vials that the impartial critic has par-taken of at the Easel's expense.

In his own mind, the Bohemian is always a great genius, whom those in power, in his world, have combined to crush. Confidently, in his cups, he tells his book companions, "they dare not give me a chance!"

In person, the Bohemian is careless, and thinks not of the allurements of fashion.

By nature he is frank and open-hearted; ready to share his last dollar with a friend in need. He thinks only of to-day and cares not for the morrow.

He is the skimmer, the advance post of the world of letters; he fights always in the van, and he strikes more often for good than for evil. He is a cannibal friend or a bitter enemy.

The world has worse men than the jolly, reckless fellows who wear the colors of Bohemia.

A WORD IN SEASON.

Now that spring is fairly inaugurated, and people, as well as nature, are busy making gardens, I think of the many homes all over the land which might be converted into mimic Edens by a little timely labor and expense, where there are no preparations for gardening, no thought of flowers for the coming season, or cool, overshadowing vines to keep off the scorching sun that, in next August, will make the inmates wish for a situation on the north side of an iceberg, in a latitude eighty degrees north. Homes where a single scraggy rosebush, or lilac shrub, in the midst of a half-grassed yard, is all of beauty there is about them, where not a solitary flower lends a charm, nor a creeping vine breaks the monotony of the bare, sun-scorched walls.

Homes! Are such places homes? Alas! for the poor inmates who have nothing but drudgery in their lives—nothing to sometimes take them out of themselves, and make them forget that life is full of care and pain, and vexations, by giving them a glimpse of heaven through cool green leaves, and bursting buds, and fragrant blossoms!

I know there are city homes where poverty forbids even the cheap luxury of flowers; where want of room confines the garden to a window, and nothing, save a pot or two of simple and easily cultivated plants may be indulged in. But, in the country, poverty is no excuse for such barrenness. There the poorest have room for flowers, and may have them without expense.

Any thing that has a pure and refining influence is desirable in a home. Flowers not only please the eye, but they speak to the higher nature with a strong and powerful voice. Somebody has called them "visible music," and another defines them as "God's thoughts come down to us," and both similes are so beautiful as to admit of no improvement.

A home surrounded with flowers, and draped in cool, shadowy vines, is surely a more pleasant abiding-place than one bare of such surroundings, and the inmates, adults as well as children, feel a noble and elevating influence from the daily and hourly communion with nature.

There are people whose love of the pure and beautiful is so slight that they profess an utter indifference to flowers; but, even to such a one, I can but think they speak, and though their influence may not be realized, it is certainly a purifying and refining one.

I hope all the readers of the SATURDAY JOURNAL are making preparations for a brilliant show of blossoms for the coming season. Plant something; even if it is not a flower of new and fashionable variety, with an unpronounceable name, it will give you quite as much real pleasure. Plant something, even if you have only a single window wherein to place it; plant, if you have nothing but a cigar-box, or a cracked sugar-bowl for a pot, and nothing save a half-dozen morning-glory seeds, or a wild violet root gathered by the roadside to place in it; plant, and when the summer comes, the cool green leaves and dewy blossoms sometimes will make you forget that life is full of care and pain, and whisper to your tired soul of a better and brighter land where flowers are eternal. Then you will thank me for this advice. LETTIE ARTLEY IRONS.

NO, SIR.

A California paper states that the "heavenly Chinese" have a heathenish habit of minding their own business, and we (that is Eve and I) wish they could be transported to "Band-box Corner," and teach a few of those who call themselves Christians, that valuable art. No, sir; I don't believe in this poking of your nose into other people's affairs. I don't believe in this looking out of your window to see if your neighbor has new sheets hung out to dry, or whether they've been knitting "footings." No, sir; I consider it a commendable business, I don't believe in this kneeling down on the velvet cushions at church and praying to have your sins forgiven, and then, directly afterward, cut Mr. or Mrs. Dash, because they, by accident, omitted to invite you to their party. No, sir; I can not be made to see where those things correspond. My Bible does not inculcate such ideas.

I also believe in being natural. Don't make yourself ridiculous by saying, "It is the most beautiful picturesque scenery that ever my eyes concentrated upon," when you're looking on a photograph of a friend. If somebody does happen to put your child upon the head, it will look extremely foolish for you to say, "It was the observed of all observers." No, sir; such talk makes me sick. And, if you desire to have friends think you have one ounce of common sense left, speak not of your child as "a premium babe." No, sir (when I say sir, I, of course, refer to madam as well, just as we speak of males and females as all mankind); if your youngsters need praising, let others do it for you. You should be the last persons in the world to do so. Do not utter big words unless they are applicable to the subject, or you are fully acquainted with the meaning of the same. I consider that it isn't in good taste to ask a writer for the press to write you a sonnet or a poem unless it happens to be a personal friend. Brains wear out quicker than one thinks for, and if we are dependent on them for a livelihood, it isn't best to tax them too much.

No, sir, I don't believe in these women lecturers always talking a whole regiment of what they would do. Why don't they do it? I believe that it wouldn't hurt them any to give a little more of the proceeds to the causes they advocate. But they never think of that! No, sir, they don't; words cost nothing, while deeds require sacrifices, and those they are loth to give. "Charity begins at home"? I know that, and I don't believe it goes out an airing any too often for its own good.

No, sir, I can not be made to believe a man will have the first chance to go to heaven, although he is a church-member, if he beats down those who work for him and does what he can to shirk the payment of his bills. That is an idea which can never enter the head of

EVE LAWLESS.

HABIT.

A HABIT being the result or fruit of a constant repetition of certain acts, might seem easy at any time to be arrested. But the testimony of experience is that the attraction of cohesion binding together the separate particles of a bar of steel is weak in comparison with the almost irresistible force of that tyranny of old word and usage, to which all men are more or less enslaved.

Unfortunately, bad habits are more easily formed than are those of an opposite character. Downhill goes of itself. *Facilis descensus*, descent is easy, even down, down, to where the avenging fires are never quenched. Every day men may be seen wrestling with habits which seem too mighty for them; and the probabilities of defeat are so many, that the sight of any such slave struggling with his fetters makes the heart sicken.

It is one of the greatest blessings of our condition in this mortal pilgrimage, that good habits are just as efficient in the direction of virtue, as bad habits are in the opposite way. Labor, for instance, difficult at the beginning, painful, become, to those who persevere, sources of the highest pleasure. Punctuality is not over natural to most men, but it becomes the second nature of those who make it a point of etiquette or of duty; and many a business man may trace back all his prosperity to this godlike attribute. Habits of observation, of study, of benevolence, etc., etc., are all acquirable, and when once they form a part of our capital in the great business of life, we are rich in a kind of treasure which moth and rust can not corrupt, or thieves steal from us. The best system of intellectual, social or moral education, is that which most completely eradicates what is habitually bad, and substitutes the most of what will remain, in the character of the pupil, as habitually good.

Of our bad habits we are frequently more or less, or totally unconscious. Our intimate friends sometimes tell us of tricks or ways which we have, and, in reply, we are ready to swear that we are innocent of the offending charge. A gentleman—possibly a neighbor of the reader of this—always prefaces every reply in conversation with an ejaculatory grunt, represented by "Hunh," as well as by any thing. A brother of such a man reprovingly asked him, "John, what makes you always say 'Hunh,' before you answer a question?"

"Hunh, I don't, do I?" said John.

THE TRUE LIFE.

Whoever looks steadfastly into his soul, and transmutes that bodiless thing into shape and substance, whether it be a temple or a poem, a painting, a piece of mechanism, a rhyme of melody, or a subtle discovery of the human brain—in what shape soever he has rendered the truth within—that man has worshiped and sacrificed; he has laid the offering of his intelligence on the altar of the Highest Intelligence, and the gift of his being is repaid—in the Book of books shall it be set down to him. But he who, having great or good gifts, never seeks to employ them, commits a great wrong not only to himself but also to society. Each person, in the great order of nature, is made for a specific purpose, and if endowed with talents which he does not use, society and civilization are defrauded of just what nature designed they should have. The wisest of economists has declared it capable of proof that the good in the world far transcends the bad, and that if the good is not constantly in the ascendant it is because of some gross neglect to recognize and encourage it.

Think of this, young men and women, and try so to order your lives and acts that what is good within you shall alone see the light, and the world will be glad that you have lived.

GIRLHOOD IN SOCIETY.

The American girl is a type of courage and self-reliance; she has a quick intelligence, and her face is strikingly beautiful; but she is without humility, sweetness and gentleness—qualities which the poets have endeavored to us, which our religion has consecrated, which have been embodied in immortal types. The American girl makes our social paradise, but illustrates no serious and sweet and devotional element. She is introduced into the social world too soon, she is commissioned as a formative spirit too early—before she has been mellowed and sweetened. A girl or woman is only qualified to be an active influence in society after experience has touched her. She makes a fine social paradise only in proportion to the richness and the harmony of her experience; after she has cast aside every thing harsh and crude, and appears a still and luminous spirit, a bright influence, a radiant friend. But now our social paradise is only furnished with beautiful faces and gay dresses. The aesthetic pleasure is poor; the social intercourse, trivial and a mere provocation of flirtation.

FAIR PLAY.

In the breast of almost every man, be his condition high or low, the sentiment, "fair play and no favor" exists. And when in the battle of life one man takes an unfair advantage of another, the opinion of the world condemns the trickster. A case in point. By dint of brains in the management of our enterprise and determination to please "The People," at any and all costs, the SATURDAY JOURNAL has won its way to a large circulation, and each week brings more readers. Success is the test of merit; although merit may sometimes fail to win success, yet lack of merit, though bolstered up by the Goddard called "Luck," is sure to fail in the end. A certain jealous "Weekly" rival evidently fears that the Star Journal's success may in the end work its ruin; so in an underhand manner, unworthy of a newspaper of such great pretensions, tried to seduce away a writer whose exclusive engagement to the SATURDAY JOURNAL is well known to the literary world. Falling in its device, the honorable "Weekly" fills its columns with abusive articles of the SATURDAY JOURNAL. It is bad enough for the daily newspapers to abuse each other, but when the weekly ones get at it what will the public do for reading matter? The people care very little for the private quarrels of newspapers. If a paper finds its circulation falling off, its readers—and profits—a younger and better paper presents more attractive features, it is no reason why it should descend to vulgar, personal abuse. Such a course can only injure it in the opinion of every fair-minded reader.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unusable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—Book MSS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book MSS. and be sealed in wrappers with open end, in order to pass the mails at "Book rates." No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; secondly, upon excellence of MS. as to "copy," third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it the full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Contributors must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We return MSS. "The Boot," "The Hen," etc.—having very little use for this kind of matter. The same may be said of "Celebrated Characters in History." They have been done so often there is very little novelty in them.—Will use "De Gamoer's Voyage," "The Loyal Dwarf," "Nethol's Wooing." Can not use "A Midnight Ride." It may do for some other paper. We return the MSS.—No use can be made of "My Brave Friend."—Can not use MSS. "Saved by a Dream." We don't like its kind. Stories of sin of its nature may do for some papers, but not for this journal. We return a Reporter's story previously sent but found to be unavailable.—The MS. "Home," is unavailable. No stamps. Return "Captured," an old story. "A Reporter's MS. "Kindness Returned."—Shall have to say no to the three MSS. by Miss L. McK. We return them, with thanks. Send them to some other paper.—Can not use the two MSS. by H. H. and two others previously sent but found to be unavailable.—The MS. "Home," is unavailable. No stamps. 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HER ANSWER.

BY EDEN E. REXFORD.

I held her hand close in my own,
And said, "I love you, you alone."
She did not answer; but her eyes
Sought mine, as though in great surprise.
Then fell, and blushed swept her cheek;
I thought she did not dare to speak.
"I love you, darling, and so well,
That words can not my passion tell."
She looked not up—she did not speak,
But rose-tints stained her half-hid cheek;
And, by that sign, I knew she heard,
Although she answered not a word.
"Nor time nor care can take away
The love I feel for you to-day."
Again the roses blossomed out
On each fair cheek. I heard, about,
The twittering laughter of the birds
Who listened to my unanswered words.
"Dear love!" I cried, impatient grown,
You give no answer: have you none?
And then, in most bewitching grace,
She laughed and looked into my face.
Why, if you love me as you say,
I've not the heart to answer nay!"

Strange Stories.

THE GREEK SLAVE.

A TALE OF VENICE.

BY AGILE PENNE.

THE quay of San Mark was almost deserted.
The sun had hid itself behind the line of the western horizon, but the fleecy clouds were yet tinged, pink and purple, by its dying rays.
On the waters that laved the marble feet of the stately palaces of proud and haughty Venice, the Republic of the Sea, rode a fleet of galleys. The gay flags floating from the mast-heads told of victory and of joy.
The Venetian fleet had just returned from an expedition against the pirates that infested the rock-ribbed islands of the Mediterranean Sea.
A bold and daring rover, known as Sysros, the Corsair, had swept the ocean and left a wake of blood behind him.
The Republic of Venice, smarting under the daring blows of the hardy rover, had fitted out an expedition against him, given the command to one Leoni, a young captain in the service of Venice, descended from a noble Venetian house.
The expedition had met the pirate galleys commanded by Sysros, and, after a bloody conflict, utterly destroyed them.
Young Leoni had returned in triumph. All Venice had welcomed him, and the Doge and Council of Three, who rule the republic, had openly decreed that thenceforth he should command the naval forces of Venice.
All seemed sunshine for the young hero, but jealous rivals marked his triumph with envious eyes, and the dark storm-clouds were gathering afar to burst upon his head.
On the quay paced two men. The richness of their dress told that they were noble. Their arms and waisted bearing, that they were captains of some of the galleys that rode so proudly on the bosom of the restless waters.
The taller of the two, a man of forty, dark in face, and stern in bearing, was known as Captain Marco; his companion, one of the most powerful noblemen in Venice, was called Gaspardo.
"By the winged lion of San Mark! it is gross injustice to us that the Doge should put this boy, Leoni, in chief command!" cried Marco, in anger.
"Ay, we are older and better soldiers; have freely given our blood in the service of the republic, but our deeds are overlooked—forgotten. A single fight has placed this stripling at the very pinnacle of fame. Did you notice how the multitude flung up their greasy caps and howled Leoni's name?" said Gaspardo, bitterly.
"Yes, while we stood by unnoticed."
"We are not men or soldiers if we submit to this wrong," Gaspardo exclaimed.
"Comrade, we will not submit to it!" cried Marco, in anger. "There are some in Venice that yet love me. All my influence shall be exerted to hurl this Leoni from the command that like a swallow he has vaulted into."
"I'm with you to the death. We will not hesitate at any means to accomplish our purpose."
"Good! Leoni, then, shall fall!" cried a deep voice, that seemed to come from the sea at their feet.
The two started in surprise.
Peering over the edge of the quay, they saw that a light-fishing boat, containing a single man, had approached them from the sea, unawares.
The man left the boat, and gaining the surface of the quay, stood by their side.
He was a well-formed, muscular person, of thirty-five or forty, dressed roughly like a fisherman. His face was bronzed by sun and wind, and he showed the martial bearing of the soldier in every motion.
"You have overheard our words?" Marco asked.
"Yes, and come to offer you my services to humble young Leoni," the stranger said, in a sonorous voice.
"Who are you?" Gaspardo asked.
"Three days ago on the deck of a proud galley the chief of three hundred brave men, they called me Sysros the Corsair. To-day, a ruined adventurer, I am simply Beppo the fisherman."
Marco gazed in his face with a puzzled look.
"Could I not call you by another name?" he asked.
"Yes," Sysros frankly replied; "years ago in Venice you and I walked side by side. An act of crime, and the republic banished me for life. Fully have I repaid the debt. The man who worked my ruin is now the Doge of Venice. I squared accounts with him at the time, for I stole his infant child and gave it to a Greek to rear as a slave."
"But why do you join us against Leoni?"
"Ask my wrecked and shattered galleys that strew dark Candia's shore!" cried Sysros, in heat. "And even now, does he not revel in the charms of a slave, a Greek girl—fair as an angel—whom he captured on my galley?"
"Telda?"
"Yes."
"He has married her."
"And therefore would I ruin him. The girl is lost to me forever, but I have sworn that he shall not enjoy her charms."
"Good; but how ruin him?" cried Marco.

"Take me with you to the Council of Three; conceal my name; let them know me only as the fisherman, and I will make a disclosure that will give Leoni's head to the block. The Three will not have mercy upon him, for—unless my guess is wrong—they already look with envious eyes upon his popularity with the rabble."
"Come, then, at once."
The three departed, and the quay of San Mark was deserted.

In a cosy chamber of Leoni's palace, hung with red velvet tapestries, radiant with Tyrian purple and shimmering gold, sat the young Venetian captain, Leoni, and the Greek slave, Telda.
Night and morning were the two. Leoni, jet-black hair and eyes; Telda, heavenly blue orbs and tresses of the hue of the ripened wheat basking in the sunbeams.

The arm of the young soldier was clasped tenderly around the taper waist of the girl, and the black eyes looked love into the blue.

"Fortune smiles lovingly upon me, my Telda," said Leoni, his right hand toying with the golden tresses of the maid. "In one little hour I won both fame and you. Am I not blest?"

"And will you always love me, Leoni, as well as now?" she asked, with a glance full of love in the face of the young Venetian.

"Yes, until the sun grows cold and the stars of heaven fade and die."
"You love the poor slave?"
"No, I love the beautiful woman whose passion makes for me a heaven on earth," Leoni replied, warmly. "But, Telda, tell me something of your life."

"It is but a simple story. All my life from early childhood has been spent in the galley of the Corsair or at his island home, among the caves in the rocks where Sysros kept his spoils."

"Is the Corsair your father?"
"No," replied Telda, quickly. "He purchased me in the slave market. I am a Greek, torn, I suppose, from my parents by corsairs like unto Sysros. He intended me for his wife. Your brave arm snatched me from a fate worse than death."

"It was not written in the stars that one so fair as you, my Telda, should become the prize of the merciless sea rover," said Leoni, fondly. "A brighter fate is in store for you, and that is to be the wife of the Venetian captain, Leoni."

Fondly the young soldier kissed the soft lips of the willing maid.

"Dared!" and Leoni's hot blood leaped into his cheeks.
"Yes; and by so doing have you forfeited your life."

"Who has the right to hold me to an account for the act?" demanded Leoni, in heat.

"The law of Venice! Know, rash soldier, that the law of the Republic decrees death to any Venetian of noble blood who shall so far forget his rank as to marry with a slave, and thus taint his ancient blood with an ignoble current!"

The color fled from Leoni's cheeks, and Telda's full lips unclosed in a low moan of agony.

"You have broken the law; your doom is sealed. Both should die, but in consideration of the brave services that you have done the State, mercifully we spare your life, Leoni, but pronounce on you the sentence of eternal banishment from Venice," said the cold voice of the chief of the Three.

"And Telda's fate?" questioned Leoni, with pallid lips.

"Death!"

Like a knell of doom the single word rung in the ears of the young lovers.

"Hear me but a moment!" cried Leoni, in despair. "It is I that have committed the crime; it is but justice, then, that I alone should suffer. This poor child knew not of your laws. I saved her from the power of the dreaded Corsair; I was her preserver. I loved her and she gave her young life into my keeping. Let me alone atone for the fault. The law demands a victim. Take my life, then, and spare this helpless girl."

"It can not be. The girl must die," said the masked judge, sternly. "Officers, your duty."

The black-robed figures advanced.
In utter despair Leoni clasped the girl to his heart and imprinted a farewell kiss upon her cold lips.

Death had no terrors after such a parting.

Then suddenly, with a noiseless step, a masked man entered the hall, and bending low before the judge, spoke.

"The Corsair, Sysros, haunting Venice in disguise, has been struck down by some unknown foe who recognized him. He is dying, and implores an audience with the Council of Three. He declares he has a secret to unfold respecting the Doge and the young Venetian soldier, Leoni."



WHO WAS TO BLAME?

What passion like love in all this world? Suddenly the door of the chamber flew open. A file of men, clad in black, masked, and with gleaming halberds in their hands, entered the room.

They moved with noiseless tread, like grim phantoms newly risen from the tomb. A chill of horror circled around the hearts of the lovers.

Leoni knew the masked figures only too well.

They were the dread agents of the Inquisition; that dark and terrible power that ruled Venice with a rod of iron.

"Captain Leoni, give me your sword; you are my prisoner," said the leader of the masked men.

Leoni gave up his sword. He knew that resistance was useless.

"And the lady?" he asked, for he noted that two of the masked men had placed themselves by her side.

"Must follow also."

"Fear not, Telda; Heaven will protect us. We are innocent of crime against the Republic of Venice," Leoni said.

Quickly the prisoners were conveyed to the tribunal chamber of the Inquisition.

Three masked men sat in judgment.

Leoni knew he stood before the famous Council of Three, whose will was supreme in Venice.

"Captain Leoni, you have committed a heinous crime, the penalty of which, by the law of Venice, is death," said the masked figure who sat in the center and was apparently the chief of the Three.

"Knowingly I have never sinned against the laws of my native land," replied the young soldier, undauntedly; "since I came to man's estate, I have periled life and limb in the service of the Republic of Venice, and shed my blood as freely as though it had been water. Let me know the crime that I stand charged withal?"

"Look upon this maid," said the chief of the Three, pointing to the Greek girl.

"Telda?"

"Yes; who and what is she?"

"A Greek girl torn from her parents by pirates and rescued by me from the power of the Corsair Sysros."

"She was his alone?"

"Perhaps so; all captives to the Corsair are slaves, be their country what it will," Leoni replied.

"You have dared to marry this girl?" questioned the masked man in a stern voice.

"Bring him before us," said the Chief of the Three.

On a rude litter the stricken Corsair was borne into the council-chamber.

The ashly hue of death was in the swarthy face of the sea-king.

"You stand before the Council of Three; speak," said the chief.

With glaring eyes Sysros gazed around him.

"Andres, Doge of Venice, do you remember the young soldier, Foscar, once thy rival? I am he! You banished me from Venice. I swore revenge. I kept the oath. I returned to Venice, stole thy child and thus seared thy heart."

"May Heaven be merciful and forgive thee as I do now," said the Doge, removing the mask from his face.

"You forgive the wrong?" gasped the outcast in astonishment.

"Yes, as I hope to be forgiven."

"I will not be less generous, now that death tugs at my heart-strings," said the Corsair, slowly; "thy child lives."

"Lives!" cried the Doge, rising in agitation.

"Yonder! The Greek girl Telda is thy child. I, too, forgive," and the rover sunk back, dead.

In joy Leoni clasped Telda to his breast, a Greek slave no longer, but the child of Venice's ruler.

The lovers were saved.

Who Was to Blame?

BY JULIA SOUTHERN.

"By all the powers, Olympia Verener, this disgracing, disgraceful affair must be stopped! For you, a married woman, to carry on so outrageous a flirtation is an insult I shall not brook another day; do you hear me? another day!" Then handsome, irate Harry Verener walked over to his young wife's low chair, intending, doubtless, to annihilate her with his angry black eyes.

Mrs. Verener raised her eyebrows half languidly, half inquiringly, and carelessly clasped and unclasped her pretty bracelet—a dainty pink enameled and gold trifle that Harry had placed on her arm on their wedding-night—only a year past.

"Why, I'm sure I don't at all understand you, Harry! I think you are angry at me,

dear, but you ought not to accuse me of doing what I'd never do."

She smiled up in his dark face, but there was only a heavier shadow gathering there.

"Olympia! you do not pretend to deny that you are deporting yourself in a most unwifely, unprincipled—"

A swift warning gleam in her beautifully blue eyes bade him desist from his sweeping accusations.

"Harry Verener, don't call me 'unprincipled'; remember I am your wife, and as such, entitled to respect."

He frowned, then smiled sarcastically.

"Exactly; for the same reason, I expect proper conduct on your behalf. As it is, do you think it modest and ladylike to accept all these attentions from Howard Ingold?"

A hot, red flush swept over Olympia Verener's white face; she bit her lips till they were bloodless, so sternly did she strive to retain command of the bitter words that surged to her tongue's end.

Her husband seemed half exultant at her passion, and a cold gleam was in his eyes when he retorted:

"The 'shoe fits,' Olympia. You know you and Howard Ingold are in love with each other, while I, always *de trop*, can make the best of it."

Gradually her cheeks had lost their crimson tinge, and when Mr. Verener ceased speaking, Olympia arose from her chair, very elegant, very stylish, very womanly, in her graceful dignity.

"Harry, I will not retaliate with harsh words, for they will only serve to widen the chasm I fear you are determined to place between us. Harry, you surely do not mean to accuse me—me, your wife, of disloyalty to you, and for Mr. Ingold?"

Her quiet, passionless manner was lost upon Mr. Verener, who, as he looked on her beauty, so marked, so rare, only felt a thrill of terrible jealousy when he remembered that Olympia had aforetime expressed, in her own peculiar way, full of impulsive enthusiasm, her extreme admiration for Mr. Howard Ingold, as the handsomest, most stylishly-nonchalant gentleman of her acquaintance.

This, at their introduction, followed by very delightful attentions on the part of both when they met; numberless dances together at various receptions and hops; Mr. Ingold's marked preference for the charming, vivacious Mrs. Verener; Olympia's acceptance of his attendance—all these horrible things went flashing across the wires of

righteous misery, and know that dear Olympia, through her thoughtlessness is destroying the life-long happiness of you both, I do feel, as a dear friend, I should interfere."

Irene Seaford's pretty face was very serious as she spoke, and then she extended her hand as if imploring Harry's sympathy for her sympathetic expression. And somehow, poor Harry, sitting in that cool, fragrant little parlor, with Miss Seaford's fascinating eyes looking down so commiseratingly upon him, and her warm fingers trembling in his hand, wondered if, after all, he and Olympia were not misnamed.

Then his thoughts flew off to the coldness that had existed between him and Mrs. Verener for a fortnight, since the day he had so rudely demanded of her that which she was bound by womanly pride not to assure him.

Since then, Mr. Ingold had called on his wife twice; the first occasion Olympia saw him, and Harry noticed how rigidly pale she looked when he went away.

The second time he knew she had declined seeing him, and he smiled bitterly as he thought it was because she, his own wife, desired to lull his suspicion.

"You will remember, Mr. Verener," and Irene Seaford's low, liquid voice dispelled the train of reverie into which he had momentarily permitted himself to fall, "you will remember it was I who first placed you on your guard against this Howard Ingold; and, as I have faithfully tried to serve both you and Olympia through the sad affair, I can assure you I shall leave no stone unturned to prove my assertions regarding that man, and also to reunite you and your wife—unless, indeed—"

She hesitated, grew almost solemn in her manner, the while steadily regarding Harry with her wondrous gray eyes, so full of lights and shadows.

Mr. Verener's heart seemed to pause for a second; that peculiar "unless, indeed" had thrilled him with a nameless terror.

"What—Irene—tell me?"

On the impulse of the moment he addressed her as he never had done before, and her eyes fairly scintillated when she heard it.

"Because I have a dreadful fear, Mr. Verener, that he has usurped your place in your wife's affections; not that I would suspect Olympia of a wrong act, understand me, please, only, Harry, it behooves us to be very cautious."

How naturally it fell from her lips—that "Harry"—and his ears had not heard it from home for many a day.

"I am overpowered by this revelation! do you think—Pshaw, why discuss it? I must beg you to permit me to say adieu now."

A pang of pitiful remorse had suddenly come to Harry Verener as he heard his wife's name used so lawlessly, and, acting as he often did from a sudden impulse, he withdrew, leaving Irene puzzled at his strange conduct.

But there was unmistakable triumph in her eyes, as she watched him away.

"Would another woman living dare play so desperate a game on such small chances? But success is crowning my efforts, and when the clematis stars drop off, Olympia Verener will have been separated from her husband, and I, Irene Seaford, will have won him! Only a little more planning, a little more patience!"

A week afterward it was, that Olympia Verener received a note from Howard Ingold, asking her to meet him at the cottage of the gardener, with whose wife he had arranged for the use of one of her rooms for a short time. He said he would only detain her a few moments, as he wished only to ask a question of her.

To say Mrs. Verener was indignant, but partly expresses the anger, almost fury, of her manner when she read the note.

"How dare he!" she almost screamed, dashing the paper from her, and rising with scarlet-stained cheeks. "After his insulting proposals the other day, when I forbade that he ever should speak to me again—how, I wonder, dare he address me thus? I'll make Jasper, if he's not busy at the stables, and go see him cowed!"

Trembling with excitement and indignation, she donned sacque and bonnet, and started for the colored coachman.

At the side entrance her husband met her; his face wearing an unusual pallor, his eyes glowing nervously.

"Out for a walk?"

He was, as lately, frigidly courteous.

"Yes," she returned, and hurried on, while Harry, with compressed lips, watched her out of sight.

Then he took a scrap of paper from his memorandum-book, and re-read the few lines thereon.

"DEAR FRIEND—I fear for the worst. To my own certain knowledge, Mr. H. I. has begged an interview at the stone cottage, and if O goes out at nine or thereabouts—but I will not say further. I S."

"Was Miss Seaford right when she thus warned me? Good Heavens! that it should come to this! that I should be—"

He thrust the paper in his pocket, and without completing the sentence, hastened off toward the cottage, strange, agonizing thoughts of Olympia's falseness, mingled with the rare beauty of Irene Seaford, chasing wildly through his brain.

The door was ajar an inch or so, and clearly and distinctly came Olympia's voice from within; and with his eager eyes to the crack, he saw Howard Ingold, handsome, listless, sitting at ease by the table, his eyes fixed on Mrs. Verener's face, that Harry could not read.

He heard the high, indignant tones, and saw her hand stretched passionately out, and as he listened, a deep, intense blush crept slowly over his soul.

"I certainly consider it an insult, sir—the words you have spoken to me, the wife of Mr. Verener. What have I ever said or done to warrant this disrespect you have shown me? True it was, I liked you as a friend; but rest assured, from this day we are strangers."

"Or enemies?" Mr. Ingold said, lowly.

"I would not wish that for your sake."

"No," added Olympia, sarcastically, "for then, perhaps, you or your friend, Miss Seaford, might renew your attempts to come between Harry and I."

Ingold twined his cane half angrily, and Mrs. Verener burst forth again.

"Jasper is outside waiting to administer a little necessary rebuke. Which is your choice, sir, an apology to Harry Verener or a whipping?"

"Neither, my darling! Let this gentleman take his leave forever."

And Harry stepped in and took his wife in his arms.

And so the artful machinations of one pair

of villains was brought to a timely, happy end; and in later days Harry and Olympia learned how the two—Irène Seaford and Howard Ingold, had planned it all together, each for their own wicked ends.

And they also learned, by their bitter experience, how much better it is that there be perfect confidence on all subjects between husband and wife.

Oath-Bound: OR, THE MASKED BRIDE.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
AUTHOR OF "SHADOWED HEART," "SCARLET CREST," ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

A STORMY INTERVIEW.

She had not long to wait, for, on the stroke of the hour, Bertrand Haighte opened the door; pale, frigid, angered.

"I am here, Undine Del Rose."

He never bowed, or otherwise acknowledged her presence.

"No. I am Undine Del Rose no longer. I have the honor of being Mrs. Haighte, of The Towers." Oh, Bertrand! Bertrand! and her tones lost their slight touch of sarcasm, and sunk to a low, entreating murmur, "don't quite hate me! I have but one excuse, and that is my love for you. Nothing else would have warranted the awful risk I have run. And see, Bertrand, Providence has signally favored me, for not even you read my identity."

She laid her hands on his shoulder, and looked up in his face, as white as death, with eyes that would have annihilated her, had that been possible.

He dashed her off with a gesture of ineffable scorn and disgust.

"Don't touch me! don't mention the holy name of the Almighty with those false, lying lips! Say rather that Satan and all his angels have aided you in this fiendish scheme! Woman—tell me how you dared do it; tell me, before I crush all your life out of you!"

He advanced a step toward her, his hot breath flaming on her cheeks.

"Bertrand, be reasonable. Remember, I am your bride, married to you by every law that the land demands. Listen, Bertrand, while I humble myself to you, and beg and pray you to love me—"

"Silence! not a word of such blasphemy from your lips! I command you, tell me what you mean—the woman I hate and abhor! the woman who shall never be my wife, despite all your infernal machinations."

Undine smiled defiantly.

"And suppose I refuse to listen to your demand?"

"Then I will wrench it from you! What did you do to my betrothed?"

"A strange question for my husband to ask his wife!"

"You madden me! I your husband? Never, if you were the last woman on God's earth. You, the arch fiendess, my wife? who has crushed my happiness the second time? Not if I could thereby earn your eternal salvation!"

"I am sorry you persist in this style of language. Bertrand, doesn't it move you in the least when you know what I have dared to do for your sake?"

He paced to and fro while she was speaking; then he stopped before her.

"Does it move me? Yes, with infinite pity and tenderness when I think of my crushed Crystel; moved to scorn and disgust when I look at you, with all the beauty you have used to cover your wickedness."

"You thought and spoke differently the evening you spent in Lexington avenue; the morning we rode in the Central Park."

A blush of angry shame flooded his face.

"If I was infatuated then, I am disenchanted now! I thank God you have no legal claim on me!"

She laughed lightly.

"I think I have. Are we not lawfully married?"

"Married?" He fairly thundered the word. "Never will I admit it! Before the whole world I will proclaim your treachery!"

She extended her hand, on which glittered the curious green-and-scarlet-veined jewel.

"You do not regard this? you are no longer afraid of it?"

He grasped her slender wrist, and tore the ring from her finger.

"Should I fear an impostor, a thief, as I believe you to be? or a ring that is my own, and that never wrought me any harm?"

A sudden, intense light shot from her eyes, and she compressed her lips a moment before she answered.

"It may never yet have wrought harm, but I swear that it shall. Now, Bertrand Haighte, what are we to do?"

He curled his lips contemptuously.

"I neither care to know, or feel at all interested in your future movements. I shall take the first train to Edenwilde, and further expose this treachery. And if harm comes to Crystel Roscoe, see to it!"

He never vouchsafed her a glance as he went out, and as the door closed after him, his parting words echoed on her ear:

"Woe to you!"

Was it a curse or a prophecy? And so far, her deeply-plotted plans, her superhuman effort that had been so tantalizingly crowned with success, had come to this!

She walked up and down, and around that elegant room; while, like a keen pond-lark at her heart, was the bitter, unendurable anguish of the knowledge that he did not love her—never would love her.

She sunk down, exhausted, on one of the sofas, cursing the luckless fate that had lured her on to fondly hope and believe he would forget Crystel Roscoe, his first love, the moment he saw her.

"I have been worse than mad! I have been too hasty; I have thwarted what long-suffering patience might have accomplished. And now, now he despises me; while I—oh, I shall die for the want of his love!"

A look of unutterable despair came over her face.

"And while I've been engaged, heart and soul, in seeking to win this man, while I crazed my brains in scheming, planning and contriving, I've lost the other; who, before I saw Bertrand Haighte, I loved as I thought I never could love again. Clifford Temple has passed beyond my reach; these accursed Haightes have won him, too! And I, I am alone unloved, despised! I can not bear it; I will die! My brain is scorching, and my heart—my poor, trampled heart—is that is broken and bleeding!"

And all that long, dreary night she sat there; and the fire burned itself away to a handful of ghostly ashes; the light was turned down by some one below as the day came on.

In the cold, gray dawn of that winter's morning, shivering and numb, she still sat on; the stages began to go rattling by; the hum and bustle of a waking city grew gradually louder, and yet Undine never moved from her position.

After an hour or so, the chambermaid tapped for admission; that aroused her, and she called to her to come in an hour.

She was fearfully changed, and a faint cry of horror issued from her blue lips as she looked at herself in the mirror.

"Curses fall on him forever, who has wrought this!"

Her eyes had seemed to freeze; from a warm, liquidly passionate light in their dark depths they had turned to a hard, steeled blackness, with neither soul or expression in them; around her mouth were deep, tense lines, that forty years of life would hardly have drawn there.

But worse than all, and so horrible it was, that she gazed at it in a bewildered, frightened stare, was her long, thick hair, that, when she entered that room was black as a raven's wing, and now hung in yellow-white luxuriance over her shoulders.

She felt herself wrecked; wrecked in appearance, as well as in heart, and, with the sight of her ruin, fled the last vestige of life in the passionate love for Bertrand Haighte, which she had been all the night through killing.

With clenched fists, she gazed back into her dull, dazed eyes.

"For this I'll make him rue the day! I swore once to be his bride; I am his bride, and now I swear unswerving vengeance against my husband! And before I see him in the arms of another—that fool he dared prefer above me—I'll lay him in his coffin, with myself, dead, across it!"

She deliberately arose and arranged her false, flossy hair; her storm of passion was spent, and her hands were untroubled as she wound coil after coil around her shapely head; she adjusted the blue glasses, and then removed the black alpaca walking-suit.

This she did up in a bundle, and donned the garments she had worn from Edenwilde; and the bride of a day went forth, husbandless, despised, alone; possessed of a fearful strength, that would not hesitate to strike any blow that would remove from her path the obstacle that hindered her one object of her now lonely existence.

That object was—REVENGE!

CHAPTER XV.

DID SHE LOSE IT?

If the family at Edenwilde were all up in arms about the strange events of the preceding night, the household at The Towers were in a similar state, particularly their guest, Clifford Temple.

At first he could not seem to comprehend it, so suddenly and mysteriously had all happened; then, when the truth gradually made itself clear, he started at once for the city.

"You know not this girl as well as I; nor her disposition. She will not give you up, so long as she has the faintest claim upon you," he said to Bertrand, as he stopped for a moment at Edenwilde, where he found Crystel and young Haighte in the parlor.

Bertrand was pacing the floor, like a chained tiger, who can not brook another instant's confinement.

"But, man, has she no delicacy thus to thrust herself upon me? Where is her womanhood that it does not cry out upon her?"

Temple's answer was a gloomy laugh.

"Nature's like hers know no reason when their will determines to attain to any object. I have known the girl since she was a child, and I can say, with truth, she is the most passionate-tempered person I ever saw."

"But a divorce can be obtained; it is merely a question of time."

"Yes; but you may depend upon it, that she will never leave you to yourself."

Crystel's eyes grew bright with the anger in their depths.

"Undine Del Rose dare not cross his path again. Let her but attempt it, and I will find a way to remove her."

Bertrand smiled upon her.

"With so loving and brave a champion and protectress, what should I dread, Temple?"

"I hope my words will prove an idle song; I fear—But, let us not court such uncomfortable thoughts. There comes your maid with your shawl; the room seems chilly."

It was Annette, but no one noticed her.

"I shall have to bid you good-morning, Miss Crystel; and if I carry Bertrand to the city, you will believe it to be for his own and your good?"

But, after they were gone, Crystel grew strangely at unrest, and walked to and fro in the long room for an hour.

"You are nervous, sister; this drug you have taken, whatever it is, has unstrung you somewhat; had you not better lie down till Bertrand returns?"

So Crystel went to her room, and Helice sat down-stairs at her sewing.

Perhaps the girl lay several minutes; then she arose, and dressed herself.

"Helice, have you any commission for me at The Towers? I am going over for the afternoon."

Miss Roscoe laid down her work and gazed anxiously at the flushed cheeks and bright eyes.

"I fear you are not well, Crystel. Do you think you are strong enough to venture over alone? You had better let Peter go with you."

"Oh, no, I'd rather go by myself. Besides, Helice, I am going to have company home."

She was assisted to dress by Annette, whom she had come to like in preference to Lida, who, though recovered from the throat disease, was still a victim to a light, disagreeable fever.

"You had better let me go, too, Miss Crystel."

Annette asked very solicitously.

"There is no need, indeed. If you want a turn in the warm sunshine, you can spend an hour or so, till I get back, down at Lida's."

"Yes, ma'am, I will, and much obliged."

So off went Crystel, her sister watching her from the window out of sight; then she turned, retraced her steps, and walked up to the depot, and bought a ticket for New York.

She had just reached the entrance-gate, when Annette locked the door, and hastily

retired to her own room; one she occupied alone.

"All the disguise I need will be to arrange this gray hair of mine, and powder my face as white as I can. These heretofore tell-tale eyes of mine have done their last mischief, curse him!"

And, indeed, in her plain, dark dress and saque, the puffs of gray hair, the dull, lustrous eyes, no one, even Clifford Temple or Mrs. St. Havens herself, would have known her.

She had plenty of time to get to the station; and by going down a side-entrance, she met no one of the family servants.

"I wonder if my suspicions are correct? Could she have gone to The Towers? or did I read her thoughts aright, and see her from her own window as she hastened back this way? At any rate, if she's not at the depot—and what she means by going is more than even I can tell; however, she shall never get out of my sight while I have power to watch her—as I said, if she's not at the depot, it's easy coming home again."

Such were Annette's thoughts as she hurried along.

At the window stood Crystel, softly tapping the glass with her kid-gloved fingers; then the train came rushing in. Crystel placed her hand in her pocket to take from thence her portmanteau, that she never deemed safe in a crowd out of her hands.

Once in the train, she replaced it, and found, to her vexation, that she had lost both her handkerchief and a valued pen-knife—a gold-and-pearl-handled one, that had been a present from Helice years before, when she was a school-girl, and that bore her initials, C. R., handsomely engraved.

She uttered a little exclamation, and the lady who sat next her looked up from the afternoon paper she was reading.

"Have you lost your money?"

It was a rather strained, harsh voice, and Crystel glanced at the massive gray puff of hair that filled the inside of her bonnet; a small plain saque and dark dress; the cotton gloves; the brown veil; in her inquisitive way, before she answered.

"No, thank you. Only my handkerchief and pen-knife."

Then she leaned toward the window, and dismissing the thought of her trifling loss, was soon deep in her plans that had led her to this secretly go to the city. She had but one object; and that was, knowing where Bertrand had gone, to follow, and thus satisfy herself as to whether the strange, bold girl who had married him had any designs on his life, since he had repulsed her love.

Crystel loved Bertrand greatly, and it was that love that urged her on; that compelled her, as it were, to follow the sudden, powerful impulse to go. What caused her to first think of it she knew not then; only in after days did she know it was the iron finger of her inevitable fate that drew her whither-sover it would.

But, after all her coming to the city, she was unable to find Bertrand; he had changed his mind as to the route he should take, and Crystel, after visiting several stores and offices where both were acquainted, returned to the depot, and reached Edenwilde a half-hour before the gentlemen.

She was a little nervous, and in her endeavors to preserve her innocent little secret, she attracted the ever-watchful attention of Helice; and although she made no remarks, she wondered what was the matter with Crystel.

At a late hour the household retired, and Bertrand and Clifford returned to The Towers.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 53.)

The White Witch: OR, THE LEAGUE OF THREE. A STRANGE STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "HEART OF STONE," "WOLF DEMON,"
"SCARLET HAND," "ACE OF SPADES," ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE WITCH'S LETTER.

Montgomery read the letter in astonishment. It was brief.

"Did I predict truly at Newport or not? Already the best part of your fortune is gone. The love that you thought so true has proved to be a hollow mockery. Are you convinced, or are you still blind? Even now, another blow is aimed at you. Are you prepared to receive it? Not. With uncovered head you bow to it; you more, you invite it—beg the stroke that will crush you to the earth. You rush madly to your doom. I pity and would save you, if you will heed my warning. Will you do so? You shall give me your answer to-night. Be at the Central Park gate, Seventh avenue and Fifty-ninth street, to-night, at nine o'clock. I will meet you there. If you value your future happiness, come."

"THE WHITE WITCH."

So read the letter that the young man perused. The mystery seemed to be thickening around him.

"Who can this mysterious personage be?" he asked, in wonder. "How can she watch my footsteps in this way. I must find the servant; perhaps from him I can learn who gave him the letter."

Acting at once on the thought, Montgomery ascended the stairs again. After giving him the letter the servant had gone upstairs.

Montgomery had not noticed the face of the man particularly, but he had no doubt that he could tell him again at a glance.

In the corridor at the head of the stairs, Montgomery met one of the servants. A single look into his face and the young man thought that he recognized the person who had given him the letter.

"Who gave you that letter for me?" Montgomery asked, accosting the servant.

The colored waiting-man looked at Montgomery in astonishment.

"Did yer speak to me, sar?" he asked.

"Yes; who gave you the letter that you handed me just now?" repeated Montgomery.

"Letter, sar?" said the servant, rolling up his eyes in astonishment.

"Yes, the one you gave me a moment ago; you remember, Mr. Montgomery's letter."

The young man was sure that he had got hold of the right man, for his voice was familiar as well as his face.

"Bress de Lord! I didn't guv yer no letter, boss!" exclaimed the negro.

"Yes you did," persisted Montgomery, who guessed at once that the man had been bribed to silence.

"By golly, boss, I hain't seen no letter!" said the servant, in wonder.

"You have probably forgotten the little circumstance," and as Montgomery spoke,

he took a dollar greenback from his pocket-book and gave it to the servant. "Don't you think you can remember the letter now?" he asked.

"Much obliged, boss," said the colored man, pocketing the greenback, with a grin that extended his mouth from ear to ear.

"And now, who gave you the letter?"

"I 'clare to goodness, boss, I don't know nuffin 'bout de letter!" was again replied.

Montgomery's brows contracted. He saw that he had not bid high enough.

"Hark ye, my friend," he said, "will a five-dollar note induce you to tell me who gave you that letter?"

"I don't know nuffin 'bout de letter," replied the man, persisting in his denial. "I speek you's got hold of de wrong chile, boss."

Then the office bell sounded.

"Dat's me!" exclaimed the servant; "much obliged for de dollar, boss," and he hurried down-stairs.

Montgomery was perplexed.

He was sure that he had spoken with the very man who had given the letter into his hands.

"The fellow must be well paid," he muttered, "to keep the secret so faithfully. How the deuce can I discover who this mysterious woman is?" Montgomery pondered over the difficult question. "By Jove!" he said, suddenly, "the best way will be to keep the appointment, made in the letter, of this White Witch. The Seventh avenue gate, Central Park," he said, reflectively, and referring to the letter, "at nine o'clock, to-night. Good, I'll be there. What the deuce can my mistake be? That is hanging over my unlucky head? Ah, well! time will tell, I suppose. Now, if this shrewd Englishman can only learn the truth as to whether Tulip Roche is friend or foe, that will be one riddle solved."

Montgomery descended again to the street.

As the young man stood in front of the hotel, meditating upon the strange events of the past few hours, a gentleman coming up the street attracted his attention.

The gentleman was of that class that is usually called a swell.

He evidently was an Englishman. He wore the shortest of coats and the tightest of pantaloons; the material was black velvet. In his hand he carried a little cane. A glossy silk hat, white in color and shining like satin, adorned his head. A pair of eye-glasses were perched upon his nose.

Montgomery could not help noticing him as he approached, his appearance was so peculiar.

Then Montgomery suddenly discovered that the face of the stranger was familiar to him. This rather astonished him, and he was still more astonished at the stranger bowed, evidently to him, and approaching with outstretched hand.

Montgomery looked at him in wonder. The stranger paused and surveyed Montgomery through his glasses.

"Well, governor, how is this for high? as you Americans say!" he said.

Montgomery started in amazement. It was the voice of Chris Pipgan!

"Pipgan!" Montgomery cried, in wonder.

All correct between you and I," replied Pipgan, with a wink; "but to the world at present, I am Chris Maltravers, you know an imported swell, just over to see this 'blasted country, you know." A perfect swell, you know; in fact, as we say in the London music halls, I'm a regular 'howler."

Montgomery could not help laughing at Pipgan's imitation of the English pop.

The change that the Englishman had made in his personal appearance by simply putting on a "nobby" suit of clothes and curling his yellow hair in little crispy curls all over his head, was astonishing.

"Your disguise is really wonderful! I didn't know you," said Montgomery.

"Pretty tidy get-up, eh, governor? I put it to you if it isn't?" and Pipgan surveyed himself complacently.

"Excellent; but the reason?"

"So as to keep my eyes on the bird that you set me to watch," replied Pipgan. "I couldn't very well follow him in the high society that he frequents in my old togs. Bless you, he'd 'tumbled to it in a minute."

"But I don't understand—"

"Plain as a pike-staff, governor!" cried the Englishman. "I was to introduce me to the gentleman as Chawles Maltravers, you know, just from across the water, familiarly called Champagne Charlie by my friends, you know; a regular howler and all that sort of thing, you know." And Pipgan gave another capital imitation of the style of the English pop—the character that he was representing.

"And your idea is?"

"To wriggle myself into his confidence, if I can; at any rate, I can circulate around his haunts without exciting any suspicion, and so keep my eyes upon him. As I told you, governor, when I took the job, I don't think that I can succeed, but I can try."

"Mortal man can not do more," observed Montgomery. "By the way, you remember that I told you of a mysterious woman who called herself the White Witch?"

"Yes, of course; the one that predicted all sorts of things concerning you?"

"Exactly," replied Montgomery. "Read this note; it was put in my hands a moment ago by one of the servants of the hotel here," and Montgomery gave the letter to Pipgan.

Montgomery had replaced the note in the envelope, which was a plain white one, and simply addressed:

"ANGUS MONTGOMERY,
Present."

The moment Pipgan's eye fell upon the writing a puzzled look appeared upon his face. A man less accustomed to conceal his emotions than the cool, cautious Englishman, would probably have started.

Montgomery noticed his puzzled look.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing," said Pipgan, carelessly; "it's a pretty nice, isn't it?"

"But it looks more like the handwriting of a man than that of a woman," Montgomery remarked.

"Precisely the idea that struck me," said the Englishman, with a peculiar smile.

"Is the hand familiar to you?"

"To me!" exclaimed Pipgan, apparently astonished. "Why, how could it be? But let's see what's inside."

The Englishman opened the letter and read it through carefully.

"What do you think of it?" asked Montgomery, after waiting for Pipgan to speak out, and finding that he did not.

"Well, I don't know," said the Englishman, slowly. "It sounds like the letter of

a friend. Are you going to keep the appointment?"

"I have not yet decided."

"I would if I were you."

"Why?"

"Because it won't do any harm, if it don't do any good. You say that the White Witch predicted

"What do you see in the street that is so interesting, Leone?" he asked, approaching her.

"Nothing."

"You are a foolish girl to look so long and earnestly upon nothing," O'Connell said, with a sneer, and, as he spoke, he drew a chair to him and sat down in it, facing the girl.

"Leone, have the kindness to transfer your attention from the outside world to your humble servant for a few minutes and you will greatly oblige the subscriber," O'Connell said, in a tone of mock politeness.

"Well?" and Leone turned her face from the window and looked, coldly, at O'Connell.

"Good; that is better," and then O'Connell surveyed the face of the girl for a few moments in silence.

"Why do you look at me so intently?" Leone asked.

"I am reading."

"Reading?"

"Yes, your face. It is very interesting," O'Connell said, a peculiar smile hovering—phantom-like—around his mouth.

"And what do you read there?"

"That you have obeyed my orders."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; Montgomery has been here to see you; he has told you that he loved you, and you have told him that he was loved in return."

"You are sure of it?"

"Quite," O'Connell answered, coolly.

"Why, the truth is as plainly written in your face as though the words were imprinted there. There is a joyous look in your flashing, dark eyes, a smile of happiness upon your lips, where, possibly, the perfume of his warm kiss yet lingers. Don't try to deceive me, Leone. I have known you too long to be easily deceived."

"I have not denied the truth of your words," she said, slowly.

"And you are now Montgomery's promised wife?"

"Yes."

"Good!" and O'Connell rubbed his hands together, softly, as if in joy. "All then is as I wish. Leone, you have played your part well. You have kept your word with me and I will keep mine with you."

"You will release me from the bond that binds me to you?"

"Yes, you shall be free, your own mistress, no longer the slave of my will. Doesn't a bright vision of happiness arise before you?"

"Why should I dream of happy days to come?" the girl asked, slowly.

"Why should you not?" he said, in a tone of wonder. "If the past has been dark and gloomy, is that a reason why the future should be also sad?"

"No, but—"

"But what?" he asked, impatiently. "You have won the love of Angus Montgomery; if the old saying is true, love is the whole of a woman's life; though with man, it is but the history of a day. You love and you are loved. What more can you ask?"

"You speak as if you thought that I intended to become Montgomery's wife," the girl said, her dark eyes flashing as she spoke.

"Of course," replied O'Connell, coolly; "you are not such an idiot as to refuse him."

"I shall never be his wife," Leone replied.

"Are you mad?" O'Connell exclaimed.

"No, I am only just."

"Just?" and O'Connell's tone was sneering in the extreme.

"Yes, both to him and to myself," answered Leone, firmly. "I promised you that I would try and make him love me; you compelled me to do so, for, by the word that I gave years ago, I am as a slave in your hands. But I will never deceive the man who has honored me with his love. After you release me from my promise, I will tell Angus Montgomery who and what I am."

"You're a fool!" exclaimed O'Connell, coarsely.

"Better a fool than to act a knavish part!" replied the girl, quickly.

"Well, it is your affair, not mine," O'Connell said, carelessly. "And now to business. You remember what I wished you to do?"

"Obtain Montgomery's check?"

"Yes, the check to be filled up by you."

"Suppose that he objects to this?"

"If he loves you, he will not," O'Connell replied.

"Lionel, why do you hate this man so bitterly?" asked the girl, suddenly.

"What is that to you?" replied O'Connell, coldly.

"You must have some reason."

"I have. Did you ever know me to do anything without a reason?" he asked.

"Never," she replied; "you are cold and calculating; your heart must be marble, not flesh."

"Perhaps it is," he replied, with a light laugh. Then a sudden thought occurred to him. "Leone," he said, abruptly, "as I entered the hotel just now, a man stood in the doorway, whose face seemed strangely familiar to me."

"Well?"

"His face sent a cold chill through every vein, and you know, Leone, I am not easily agitated. Can you guess why this man's face should trouble me?"

"No," she replied, absently. She was hardly heeding his words; her thoughts were far away.

"It was because his face recalled to my mind the affair in England that so nearly cost me my life."

The girl started and a cloud came over his face as he spoke.

"Why should the face of this stranger remind you of that dreadful event?" she asked.

"That I can not tell; but the face had some connection with the affair."

"Ah!" and Leone started suddenly, as the exclamation broke from her lips.

"What's the matter?" O'Connell asked, noticing the strange expression upon her face.

"Your words have recalled to my mind something that I intended to tell you before, but I forgot to speak of it. Some time ago, a man, evidently an Englishman, came to the door and wished to know if I wanted to purchase a little dog that he had for sale."

"Well, what of that?" asked O'Connell, who saw nothing remarkable in the circumstance.

"When I asked the dog's name, he answered, that it was called Malley, short for Malper."

O'Connell could not repress an exclamation of surprise as the name fell upon his ears.

"Malper?" he muttered.

"Yes, I thought that the coincidence was strange. I did not let the man see that the name was familiar to me, and carelessly I

said that the name was a strange one; he replied that it was the name given to the puppy by the man from whom he had bought it."

O'Connell remained silent for a few moments busy in thought.

"What was this man like?" he asked, suddenly.

"He was not quite so tall as you are; dressed common, but not shabby; keen gray eyes and light yellow hair."

"Any beard?"

"No."

"Was his hair curly?"

"No; straight."

"His face thin; rather a large nose?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Leone, the face of your dog-man is exactly the face of the man that I met just now at the hotel door, below; I am afraid that we are in danger."

A troubled look swept over the face of the girl.

"Then you think—"

"That a sleuth-hound is on our track!" he said, with fierce accent.

Leone shuddered and covered her face with her hands.

"Do not fear!" he cried; "leave my wits alone to get the better of this fellow who has tracked us over the broad ocean. He is hunting us; in turn, I'll hunt him. Don't fear; the danger is as yet far in the distance. Lose no time in getting Montgomery to sign the check. That done, I release you from your promise, and you are free to go where you like and with whom you like."

"Montgomery is coming to-morrow. I will try and carry out your wishes."

"Do so; I will come again to-morrow evening. Till then, good-by," and O'Connell left Leone to her own sad thoughts.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 49.)

The Blackfoot Queen:

OR,
OLD NICK WHIFFLES IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH.

A Sequel to "The Phantom Princess."

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS.

AUTHOR OF "THE PHANTOM PRINCESS," OR, NED HAZEL, THE ROY TRAPPER.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE TOILS.

LITTLE did Nick Whiffles and Ned Mackintosh dream of the experience to which Miona was doomed, when they left her to herself in the wood.

Her position seemed so secure against discovery by the Blackfeet, that even the veteran trapper deemed it perfectly safe, so long as the darkness lasted.

The girl resolved to obey the instruction of her old friend to the letter, and drawing the blanket close around her, she sat down at the foot of the tree, under which she had been standing, and almost instantly sunk into a profound slumber, for she needed rest, as much as did her lover.

But her nerves were in a more excitable condition, for the shadow of her great danger was upon her, and after she had slept for about an hour, she suddenly awoke to a full consciousness of her situation.

At the same moment, she was conscious of a feeling of peril such as she had not when first left alone. It was a sort of premonition of danger that was so impressive, that, despite the warning she had received from Nick, she determined to change her position by withdrawing somewhat further into the wood.

She stepped back a dozen paces or so, when she found herself beside a tree, similar to that which she had just left. Here she stood motionless and listened.

Was that the rustling of the wind that just then caught her ear? No; it was upon the ground, and while she was seeking to still the beating of her heart, she distinctly heard the tread of some one upon the leaves!

Some wild animal, she concluded, was wandering near her, unconscious of her presence.

"I will not stir, and he will pass by," she thought, as she endeavored to pierce the inky gloom about her.

But no; it was drawing near, and it was moving so stealthily that she was certain her presence was detected, and it intended to steal upon her.

Filled with alarm, Miona reached her hands upward to seek if there were any limbs upon which she could seize and draw herself up out of its reach.

No; there were none, and the creature was now within a few paces!

What should she do?

She had no weapons at all with her; she had left the deserted village in such haste that she had not once thought of bringing her rifle with her. She was helpless.

Then came the hope that she might frighten the animal into leaving her, and summoning her courage to the intense trial, she made a light spring toward it in the darkness, throwing up her outstretched arms, as she had seen Nick do with the bear, and shaking her blanket at the same time, and uttering an aspiration intended to startle the creature, whatever it was.

As she did so, she felt her arm gripped in such a manner that she knew at once that an Indian had seized it!

With a gasp of terror, Miona attempted to draw back and wrench herself free; but giant could not have held her more securely.

"Heaven be merciful!" she prayed, struggling with the strength of desperation.

"Miona! my queen!"

She recognized that voice; it belonged to Red Bear!

Ay; the very being most dreaded upon earth, had her now in his power!

Miona would have screamed, but her tongue seemed palsied; she attempted to speak, but could not! She was like one dead.

"My queen of the woods!" added Red Bear, in his native tongue. "I have sought you long, and with tears in my eyes; why did you flee from me?"

Her speech came back to her, but what should she say? What reply could she make? What reason could she give? What was to be gained by attempting to bandy words with him who knew no reason or mercy?

Oh, if she but had a pistol, or even a knife! How she would fight for her freedom, never so dear to her as at this moment. He used no violence, but, holding her with a grip that was painful, he led her forward into the path again.

A pang of hope shot through her frame. Where was Nick? Was it not time for him to return? Would he not be coming along this path in a few minutes? Would they not meet, and then she would be safe after all.

But no one else was encountered, nor did she hear any indication of the proximity of her friends.

"Why do they remain away? Have they, too, deserted me?" she wailed, in her anguish. "Is there no hope for me?"

The heavens seemed closed, indeed. As the dim moonlight fell upon her captor, she glanced askance at him. In the obscurity he seemed ten times more hideous and repulsive than ever before.

She did not dare struggle or resist him. She knew what a fearful temper he possessed, and she wondered at his forbearance, in the face of the struggle she had already made to flee from him.

Perhaps the exultation he felt in her recapture compensated him for all the labor he had undergone in the pursuit.

Whither would he take her? Back to the camp, where his companions were awaiting his return?

She had scarcely asked herself this question, when he left the path, taking the side opposite to the one by which they had entered it, and at that moment utter, hopeless, dead despair took possession of her.

Why struggle against fate? She was doomed to fall into his hands; the fond dreams that had cheered her for years were not to be realized; hope was all a mockery; there was no happiness for her; she was never to see that cherished mother again, nor the face of that father that had vanished as suddenly as he appeared before her.

"Lead on, Red Bear," she murmured, hardly knowing what she said.

The triumphant young chief needed no such admonition, for he strode through the wood so rapidly, dragging her after him, that she could scarcely keep her feet.

She had no knowledge or thought of the direction she was pursuing, for it was nothing to her, and she did not seek to know. She only knew that she was the most wretched and suffering of mortals, and that the future was all a blank to her. The bright sky overhead held no moon or stars for her.

On, still on he led her, his grasp never relaxing, and stumbling forward, as though held in the power of some horrid nightmare.

When it seemed to her that she had been dragged forward for a mile (although it was less than one-eighth of that distance), she saw that they were nearing a camp-fire. She concluded at once that it was the main one, around which most of the party were gathered, but was somewhat surprised upon reaching it to observe that no one else was near. They were still as much alone as though buried in the very depth of the forest.

Still the camp had been recently visited, for the fire was burning so brightly as to prove that it must have been replenished but a short time before. There was a heap of brush and fuel lying near, and gathering up an armful, Red Bear cast it upon the flames.

As they flared up they made the immediate circle in which they were standing as light as day.

Perhaps, in her distress, Miona's remarkable beauty was increased, for when the young chief turned his dark eyes upon her, there was no anger and nothing but love in his expression, and with something like sadness in his voice, he asked:

"Why did the Queen of the Woods flee from me?"

"She wished to go to her own home and kindred."

"Her home is with the Blackfeet, and none of her kindred can love her as they do."

"But Miona is white and they are red; they are of different races and can not consort together."

"Love knows no race nor color," was the rather poetic expression of the dusky lover, who certainly did not intend that he should be argued out of the position he had assumed.

"Woo-wol-na promised that when five summers had come and gone, I should be true to my people. Has Woo-wol-na two tongues?"

"Red Bear made no such promise," was the sullen reply of the Blackfoot. "It is Red Bear that claims the Queen."

"But he does the Queen a great wrong; she has spent many years with the Blackfeet; they have treated her kindly, and she loves them; but her heart is with her father and mother, who are waiting her coming."

Let them come to the Queen," replied the warrior. "They shall be given the chief's lodge, they shall sleep upon the finest furs, and shall eat the fattest buffalo; they shall be welcome for all the moons they wish to stay, because they are the friends of the Blackfoot Queen."

Miona had no hope or thought of gaining a concession from her captor, but she was seeking merely to gain time. There was a faint stir of hope again when she found no other Indians near the fire. Surely Nick Whiffles and her lover must speedily miss her and institute a search, and she believed the sagacity of the trapper ought to be sufficient to direct him to the right spot.

The absence of the Blackfeet was as inexplicable as that of her friends. She knew that the wood was swarming with the dusky foes, and how it was that they still remained away was certainly singular, to say the least.

She was not aware that this was only one of a number of fires, kindled here and there in the valley for the purpose of distracting the fugitives and preventing their escape over the ridge.

Red Bear showed the same deference toward her that had characterized him during the years past. He evidently regretted the outbreak of which he had been guilty at the deserted village, and which he was certain had hastened the flight of the girl, and caused the aversion with which she seemed to regard him.

Having recovered possession of her again, he was now anxious to undo this mischief and to restore himself to his original place in her esteem.

Both were standing near the fire; he had his arms folded, in the stoical, indifferent manner of the Indian warrior, while his swarthy face, and his dark eyes that scarcely ever wandered from hers, were lit up with an expression of undisguised admiration and love.

Surely no Indian had ever coveted maid as he coveted her; surely never had the earth seen such a flower bloom as she at his side; surely she was worth any sacrifice or danger that he could offer.

Miona stood with her blanket gathered about her long, dark, Indian-like tresses hanging over her shoulders, her face downcast, as she looked gloomily into the fire, answering his questions and making her remarks with the dreamy indifference of one who is unconscious of what she is saying.

"When will Red Bear take the Queen of the Woods back to his village?"

"Now," was the instant reply of the Indian, his eyes flashing up at the thought of her concession.

"But the way is long, and Miona is weary."

"She can sleep in the canoe of Red Bear; he will spread his blanket for her, and while he paddles she can sleep."

"The way is long to the water where his canoe is lying; she would rest here until daylight comes, and then go with him."

The black eyes of the Indian flashed, for he understood on the instant what this request meant. She wished to tarry here by the camp-fire until her friends could come to her rescue again.

He glanced furtively about in the gloom, as if to make sure that no form was stealing upon him, and then stepping close to the girl, asked, in a hurried undertone:

"Does the Queen look for the coming of her friends? She may turn her eyes away, for they will never come again!"

"What!" gasped Miona; "are they dead?"

"They sleep in the ground," replied Red Bear, intending to give a poetical phrase to the deliberate falsehood he was telling.

"Oh! how can I bear this?" wailed the poor, stricken captive, pressing her hands to her forehead, as if to keep her head from bursting.

She believed the monstrous deception, for it accounted for the continued absence of her friends. She was certain that no other cause could explain their failure to return to her.

Very naturally, when she awoke in the wood, it seemed to her that she had been sleeping for a much longer time than was really the case. She was confident that three or four hours had passed since she closed her eyes in slumber, and while she sat unconscious upon the ground the two men who had risked all for her had met their doom.

Red Bear saw that his deceit had done its work, and with a sort of chivalric difficulty to understand, he maintained a respectful silence until she could recover, in a measure, from this great woe that had come upon her.

There were no tears and no more lamentations upon the part of Miona. A sort of dull stupor appeared to possess her. There was one sharp, agonizing pang when the Blackfoot pronounced the terrible words, and then the same stolid despair came back to her. The bright flower of hope that she had cherished was withered and dead, and no tidings could deepen her miserable condition.

Some five, ten, fifteen minutes passed and still the two figures stood silent and motionless by the lonely camp-fire. Miona was in that dull, unnatural state, hardly conscious of where she was, while her companion was all alert, constantly turning his head and looking about him, as though he was not entirely free from personal fear.

"Will the Queen go with Red Bear?" finally ventured the Indian, in the hope of breaking the oppressive spell that was resting upon her.

"Not yet—not yet," she answered, waving her head sadly from side to side. She was pale, but calm, and turning her face upon him she asked in a voice, which, while it sounded like that of another person, was still without the least trace of emotion.

"Where are all the warriors of Red Bear?" he pointed to the south.

"Yonder is kindled the camp-fire of the Blackfeet, and there the warriors are gathered."

"Are they all there?"

"There are some hunting through the wood for the pale-faces."

Again was there a painful flicker of hope in the heart of Miona, and she asked, with an eager quickness:

"Why do they hunt for the pale-faces if they are dead?"

The question was so quick and unexpected that the wily red-skin was nonplussed for the moment. He recovered quickly and answered:

"All do not know it; those who have not heard of it, are still searching the woods for them."

Ah! that one single second of hesitation undecieved Miona; she knew Red Bear had told a falsehood, and her friends were still living.

Still Miona, as far as possible, concealed her discovery from her captor. She was resolved to delay their going by every means in her power; so she resorted to several trivial questions, finally asking:

"Do we return alone, or with the warriors of Woo-wol-na?"

"We shall go back together—sh!" he added, turning his head as quick as lightning.

As he did so, the figure of Ned Mackintosh came out of the gloom, and stood before him with his revolver in hand.

"Attempt to raise your gun and you're a dead dog!" muttered the young scout, raising his hand. "If he don't understand that, Miona, please translate it for him."

Whether he understood it or not, can not be said, but forgetting all in the one thought of self-preservation, he whirled on his feet to flee, when he found himself face to face with Nick Whiffles!

"Hold on a minute, Red Bear," said the trapper, "there's a condemned little difficulty between us that had better be settled now!"

CHAPTER XVI.

OVER THERE!

"CALAMITY," said Nick Whiffles, addressing his dog, "just keep watch, and if you smell any of the varmints comin', let us know in time to slope."

Thus assured that there was no danger of surprise, the trapper gave his attention to the case before him.

Red Bear was standing with his arms folded, his gun leaning against the nearest tree, fairly cornered, but still defiant and ready to die the death that he was certain was only delayed for a few minutes. Ned Mackintosh held his pistol so as to cover the red-skin, and to anticipate any movement he might make.

Nick stood silent a moment, and then turning to Mackintosh, said in a low, rapid voice:

"I have told you what to do, lad; take the gal and do it!"

The young man motioned to the girl to approach, and with one bound she sprang across the intervening space. Taking her by the arm, the two turned their backs upon the motionless figures, and at a rapid walk disappeared in the wood.

"Red Bear," said Nick, "I want you to stop chasing that gal; she don't belong to you, and I'll be condemned if you shall follow her."

He made no reply—sullen, stoical and defiant as ever, and Nick began to lose patience.

"I've got ye in my power, and it wouldn't take much for me to send you under and raise your ha'r, but I don't want to do it, on account of your father, fur me and him went on the war-path together afore you were born, and we allers took a sort of hankerin' fur each other."

Red Bear now raised his gaze and showed by his manner that he felt some interest in what was said.

"Sarcumstances have made me run sam-mat ag'in Woo-wol-na durin' the last few years, and I don't s'pose he'll look over the part I've played; but it's all the same to me whether he does or don't. We've had a purty hard job of it, Red Bear, to keep out of your way, and you come mighty near gettin' ahead of us, but I think we've sarcumvented you at last. Don't you think so?"

The Indian answered by darting a quick glance around in the woods, the meaning of which was apparent to the trapper.

"You needn't expect that any of them are goin' to help you. My pup is on the watch and he'll let me know soon enough to keep out of the way of the Blackfeet."

It may be said here that it was through the assistance of Calamity that Nick and Ned had finally discovered Miona. First making sure of her rescue, they then hastily agreed upon their plan of action.

The trapper directed that they should approach simultaneously from opposite directions, and Ned should take the girl in charge and start in as direct a line as possible for the northern ridge, passing on over that until he reached the stream upon the opposite side, where he was to await the coming of Whiffles. The latter, with the assistance of his dog, had no doubt but that he could easily discover them. His great purpose was to get them out of this dangerous valley as speedily as possible, and at the same time to place them beyond any likelihood of being overtaken by the Indians, who, as a matter of course, would not relinquish the hunt so long as there was any prospect of success.

Nine mount

CHINESE LOVE SONG.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

My love she has the sweetest eyes
That ever yet was seen.
They are decidedly oblique,
And very large and green.
The papa of my Shanghai belle,
Is a Chinese Mandarin.

She moves with grace, her fairy feet
Make music as she goes,
And they are but two inches long—
No longer than her nose;
Only two little inches long,
Including heels and toes.

Oh, love, you are so angel like,
None other can I prize,
You must have lived your whole life long
On dainty rats and mice,
And had for dessert nothing else
But cat soup and pup pies.

How poor am I? I only live
On common rice and tea,
And half the time I can't get these.
Yet, oh, how rich I be:
Thy gentle smile is far more sweet
Than birds'-nest soup to me!

An Hour of Agony;

OR,

THE REJECTED LOVER'S VOW.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

"It can never be, Mr. Marden," and the lady's voice was firm, though low.

"Agnes, I can't take such an answer. It would kill me—it comes so unexpected," pleaded the man, with broken tones, as he turned again toward the fair speaker.

Agnes Cather was truly fair. Rather above the medium height, graceful and queenly in her carriage, with beautiful hair, jetty black, as were her brilliant eyes. She did not appear to be more than eighteen, at the most, although her form was so rarely matured and perfectly developed.

The man was young, of good figure, and with handsome features, but upon the latter dissipation and excesses had stamped their indelible mark. Rich, young, and of a convivial disposition, evil associates had initiated him into the mysteries of "fast life," which can be seen in its extreme in the "Mound City."

"It is all the answer I can give you, and it is not my fault that you are not prepared for it. You should know my reasons—at least the main ones—for changing as I have done, of late, in my manner toward you," added Agnes, arising.

"But what have I done—how have I offended you? There must be some mistake."

"I think not; but if you insist, I will tell you plainly, that there may be no misunderstanding; that you may know my reply is irrevocable."

"Tell me; I am innocent of any wrong."

"I will, and pardon me if I wound your pride. There was a time when I won't say I loved you—but when I respected and admired you. What has caused the change? Your own actions during the past year. You have degraded your natural talent and goodness of heart by drink. You have been so under the influence of liquor that you were senseless. You have been picked up in the streets and conducted home by policemen, when, had not your wealth protected you, you would have awoke in the station-house. You have figured in more than one street fracas; you have gambled heavily, and have felt no shame in being seen with the most degraded and profligate beings.

"Do you wonder, then, that, seeing all this, my feelings toward you should change, or that, where once you were considered a very dear friend, you should be treated with cold politeness? Can you blame me for changing? No, the change is in yourself. If I ever felt a sentiment of love for you, it is all gone now," Agnes said, in low, calm tones, but with pale features.

"You are right, Miss Cather, and I can not blame you. But I did not think. One thing led me on to another, until I could not tell where to stop. But I can change—I will change, if you will only give me one ray of hope to live on during the trial," pleaded Edward Marden.

"It can not be; I would be acting a falsehood, for I can never again look upon you as the friend I used to know."

"Think again, Agnes—only think what your words may drive me to," he resumed, in agitated tones. "With the hope of finally winning you to be my wife, I could accomplish any thing. But if you discard me now, where will it end? I can tell you. My dearest hope crushed, I would go to the bad. I have not gone far in the path now, and I can turn back if I have your hand to lead me. If you refuse it, I can not—I will not—try to reform. Agnes, my future rests with you."

"Mr. Marden, this is worse than useless. How can I trust you if you can not trust yourself? If the self-respect of a man's own heart does not save him, that of another surely will avail nothing. And then, when a young man acts as you have done, what is to be expected of him when he grows older and more hardened? Who could trust him? But enough. You have my answer, and I repeat it. I will never marry you, and all further argument is useless."

"You mean this?"

"I do."

"Then upon your head rests my ruin! I will plunge into excesses and go downward as fast as I can. But mark my words; if you do not marry me, no other man shall call you wife while I live. If I swing for it, I'll kill him like a dog!"

"Enough, sir; will you go now, or must I call the servants to eject you?" exclaimed Agnes, her cheek flushed and eyes flashing, as her slipper-foot stamped the floor.

"I will go—obedient to the last. But remember my vow," sneeringly added Edward Marden, as he left the room.

Three years passed on, and many were the changes wrought in the lives of the two persons introduced to the reader.

Edward Marden had but too well kept his threat of going to the bad as fast as he could. From being an occasional drinker, he became a confirmed sot and gambler. His name figured often and largely in the police reports. And at last, in a quarrel over the gambling-table, he committed murder. To escape the consequences he fled the city, and gradually became forgotten by nearly all those who had known him.

Agnes Cather formed the acquaintance of a rising young merchant, who finally induced her to become Mrs. Walter Lawton. Shortly after this she removed to St. Joseph, Missouri, and settled down in comfortable circumstances, Lawton following his occupation.

The threats of the rejected suitor had long

since been forgotten, and Agnes was as happy as the day was long. But the bitter vow of Edward Marden was soon to be recalled to her memory in a fearful manner.

One pleasant evening, soon after Walter had left for the store, a loud and peremptory ring sounded at the door. The one servant girl had been given leave to spend the night at home, and Agnes was alone, save the little boy sleeping soundly up-stairs. Without a thought of danger, Agnes answered the bell. As she opened the door, a roughly-attired man pushed her back, and entering, adroitly closed the door behind him. She stood astounded at this sudden action, and ere she could speak, the intruder drew a revolver, and cocking it, thrust the cold muzzle against her breast.

"Don't you cry out; if you speak a word above a whisper, by all that's holy, I'll send a bullet through your heart!" and a harsh, discordant chuckle gurgled out from beneath the bristling mass of coarse hair.

Agnes did not speak; the sudden action had completely bewildered her.

"See here, my ducky, I want to give you a bit of advice. I am here on business, and won't bear any trifling. If you act all right you'll not be hurt, for I have other game. But mind; at the first sign of attempting to spoil my plans, I swear I'll blow your brains out. Now lead the way to the room you were in," and still holding the pistol in readiness, the ruffian followed Agnes into the library, where she had just been sitting, the door of which he closed. Then he drew a cavalry carbine from under his coat.

Standing the gun up in one corner, the man sank down in an easy chair, with a grunt of self-complacent gratification.

"Now, Miss Aggy, old girl, take a seat and listen to me. That's right; don't stand on ceremony with old friends. Now, take a good look at me; don't you recognize your old lover? You don't? Then I'm Ned Marden. Now, do you know me?"

Agnes uttered a faint gasp of terror. The long-forgotten threat came up before her with startling vividness. The rough-looking brute before her appeared bad enough to make his words good, and his actions thus far fully confirmed the thought.

It seemed difficult to find any resemblance in this being to the polished, refined Edward Marden of past days. He had grown stouter, his face bloated and pimply, of a deep fiery red, so far as could be told through the covering of dirt and grease. His eyes were bleared and watery, and the razor evidently had not touched his face for



AN HOUR OF AGONY.

months. His dress was of coarse jeans, and raw-hide brogans covered his feet.

"And now that you do know me, why let's talk on business. Mayhap you've forgotten the words I spoke some time ago; so I'll just freshen your memory. I said that no man should call you wife while I lived—that I would kill him like a dog. I expect you thought it was only an empty threat, when so long a time went by without my keeping my word; but it wasn't."

"Several things—no need to be particular—have kept me away until a few days ago, when I came here. I went to the theater last night, and as luck would have it, I saw you. Then it was easy to guess that the fellow with you was your husband. Well, I followed you home, and then watched my chance. I saw the girl leave, and then your husband, and so I thought I would drop in and make you a call, before proceeding to make my word good."

"Well, I'm going to stay here until your husband comes. As he enters that door I'll put a half-ounce ball through him, and then leave. Luckily for me they don't pay much attention to a fellow's shooting or carrying weapons here. Do you understand? You witnessed my vow, and it's only right that you should witness its fulfillment," and Marden laughed again, a hideous chuckle, that caused Agnes to shudder, not with dread for herself, but for her husband.

"Now, ducky, why don't you do the polite? I've not eaten a bite since morning, and I am as hungry as a wolf. So stir your stumps and get me something to eat. Hold on," he added, as a gleam of hope shot across Agnes' face, "and I'll go with you; you can't fool me that way!"

Agnes led the way to the pantry, lighted by the ruffian, where he speedily satisfied his hunger. Then he demanded liquor, and fearing to anger him, Agnes produced several bottles of fine old cognac, for Walter was not a strict teetotaler. These Marden placed upon the little table in the library, together with a box of choice Havanas, and drew a chair beside the table, with a grunt of satisfaction.

"Haul up a chair, old girl, and keep me company. You need not drink nor smoke if you don't want to, but it looks more sociable, and I want to keep my eye upon you. Puff!" he exclaimed, as he tossed off a goblet-full of the oily, subtle liquor. "That tastes well enough, but it is too weak."

A second glass-full went the way of the first, and a ray of hope sprung up in the heart of Agnes, who knew that the brandy was above proof, and the more powerful

from its very smoothness. The first bottle was at length emptied and dropped upon the floor, and the ruffian, now beginning to be affected by his potations, opened a second.

Agnes was fearful lest his head should resist its fumes until the return of her husband. It was now half-past eight, and he returned home punctually at nine. But for the thought of the helpless little one upstairs, she would have risked all in one struggle for freedom. Marden did not watch her closely now, for the heavy draughts were beginning to tell their tale, and Agnes believed she could gain the street before he could seize her.

The minutes rapidly rolled on, and still he retained his seat, but with fast-increasing difficulty. Once, in reaching over for the cigars, he fell upon the table, crushing the candle almost out, but then he recovered with an oath, and swallowed another glass-full.

"Shay, ol' gal, w'y don't th' flier come?" He finally hiccupped. "I'm cus' sleepy. Goo' min' take nap—'ll you wake me when 'e comes?"

"Yes, I will," Agnes managed to utter, in a tone whose calmness surprised her. The clock struck nine. Her husband might come at any moment.

Marden tried to start up, but the chair-leg caught in the carpet, and he fell at full length. Then, after vainly essaying to arise, he rolled over and placed his head upon the chair-back. Agnes almost feared to breathe lest he should arouse, and sat on through the most agonizing minutes she ever experienced.

Then there came an explosive snort from the drunken brute, followed by a steady, rumbling snore. He was asleep.

Agnes cautiously arose and approached him. The revolvers in his belt were fully exposed, and carefully drawing them forth, she grasped the gun, and passed lightly out of the room. At the same instant she heard a well-known footstep at the hall-door, and with a glad cry, she rushed forward, and was clasped in her husband's arms.

"What is the matter, Aggy?" cried Walter, in wondering alarm. "What does this gun and pistols mean?"

"That man—in there—kill you," she gasped, and then sunk fainting upon his shoulder.

Gently lowering her to the floor, Lawton grasped one of the pistols and sprang toward the other door of the library. One glance at the desperado showed him that

The course of the trail ran zig-zag among and around the huge bowlders and occasional clumps of timber, with which the valley abounded, and hence I was compelled to move slowly and with great caution to avoid running upon the camp unexpectedly.

While intently scanning the track and surroundings, having halted under the shadow of a huge rock for that purpose, I was suddenly aroused to the fact that I was not alone by hearing a slight cough directly behind.

I wheeled, with my rifle half-way up, and discovered the form of a man, clad in the rough garb of a hunter, standing a little way off, leaning upon his rifle, and regarding me with an amused smile.

"Pardon me for so abruptly interrupting your meditations," he said, courteously, at the same time advancing and extending his hand.

There was something about the man that struck me forcibly—something in the quiet determination of the face, the light of a full, clear eye, the evident strength and agility that lay in the slight, graceful limbs.

"I see," he continued, "that we are bent on the same mission, or at any rate, in the same direction. You are following this trail, I think?"

I told him that I was, that I had seen a shod hoof among the other tracks, and wished to see *why* it was there.

"It is the track of my horse, a favorite, that these rascals have stolen, and I have been following them for thirty miles. I must have my horse, for he is one that can not well be replaced."

I hastened to assure him that I was entirely at his service, and then, without further talk, we again took the trail, and in half an hour sighted the Indians' camp-fire.

A few minutes' scrutiny revealed that the party numbered nine warriors, that they were Mountain Apaches, and were busily engaged in getting ready their evening meal.

It is not usual for me to allow other men, especially strangers, to lay down the plan of action, in other words, to cut out my work for me, but in this case it seemed perfectly natural that I should do so. I asked no questions, nor did I suggest any thing. I just did as he directed, much to my own surprise.

Our plan was simple. We both carried a rifle and a six-shooter. We would get in close range, open fire, and then act according to circumstances.

Of course the first two, those whom the rifles covered, fell in their tracks, and then,

We recovered his horse, and half a dozen others, and then, well satisfied with the result, took the back trail for camp.

Beat Time's Notes.

THE last box of cigars which I bought deserves more than a passing notice. The first one that I lit wouldn't smoke, it was so mean. I wouldn't even smoke when I threw it in the stove. The second smoked too good, considering the quality of the smoke, which was a cross between the aromatic odors of a burning shock of fodder and a burning paper mill. The next would n't draw; I drew two teeth in trying to make it, and then had to bore a hole through it with a gimlet. The next completely concaved my cheeks in, so that they never will get con-vexed again. In trying to smoke the next I injured my backbone and dislocated my neck completely. The next I tried to smoke went out of the window, while I went out of the door. In smoking the next I lost five pounds in flesh. Then I had twenty minutes for dinner. The next wouldn't smoke at all, though I lit it at both ends and put a mustard poultice in the middle. The next gave me a cramp in the leg. The next one I sucked in; but the next one raised my wife, who floored me with a boot-jack, and the balance of the box went for use as kitchen fuel—that is, as many of them as would burn. It is a mullen-cholly fact that those cigars were made out of the best mullen that could be got.

My neighbor's dog is my sworn enemy, and from the manner in which he barks all night long under my window, I infer that I am his enemy. His master and I are on purely neighbor-terms; that is, he loves me no worse than I love him, but he has a satisfactory advantage over me in the shape of that dog, which he has taken great pains to cultivate for the express purpose of making it interesting for me. He is a good sleeper, slightly deaf, and of course he is not disturbed; but I am a poor sleeper at best, and when I do forget my sins and my debts, and too often, my prayers, and get into the first light, flighty spell of sleep, it is broken into pieces by one blast of that dog. I have gotten up at such times and have thrown every available piece of portable property in my room at him. I have exhausted my stove-logs; my cabinet of geology has been reduced; my library of Patent Office Reports has even been sacrificed to wreak that dog's bark, but it has weathered the storm. Still I have one consolation: the bigger the bark grows, the dog is correspondingly reduced, and if I don't go up with loss of sleep in a few years, I am convinced there will not be enough left of the dog to make the smallest bark.

THE fashions for this spring will be a little different from the last. Calico dresses will be worn for evening parties, with the sleeves at a roll; the skirts will be lined with silk, and have Indian trails. Diamond pins will be carried in the pocket. Shoes will run very much to heels, which will be in the center of the foot; a step-ladder goes with each pair of shoes, for the purpose of allowing the wearer to get into them. Gloves for promenade will continue to be old stockings, yarn, but lined with kid this season. Blushes are nearly done away with, but a few old-fashioned ladies will be found who will wear them. Bonnets will be composed of one small rosebud with strings, which will insure good protection against rainy weather. Toadstools will be used as parasols. It is hinted that hymn-books this season will be a shade darker, and contain more fly-leaves for Sabbath notes, and a small mirror, so that the bearer can see herself as others see her. Silk waists lined with coffee-sacks will be worn inside out, trimmed with bugles and bass-drums. Smiles will be affected. Poor old acquaintances will be cut by-us.

DANIEL was a Jew, of the Hebrew order of architecture. He was cast into a den of lions hungrier than a tableful of cheap boarders, but the venerable Hebrew received no malt-treatment from them, from the fact that he never had been guilty of ringing other people's door bells when he was a boy, or had never been caught *flon*. He was a prophet to himself and his race, and has since been greatly lionized.

A HUSBAND, whose better half persists in kicking him around, says he can't help himself for she has the sole control of him.

WHEN I see a storekeeper earnestly endeavoring to cut calico with a pair of snuffers, I think he is very far from being up to snuff, or what he last drank had too much water in it.

My patent clothes-wringers are the best things in a tight squeeze that I know of. The clothes that are run through them need no drying nor ironing. They will wring any thing. They are warranted to wring a chicken's head off; to ring a fire-bell; wring a false lover's heart, or wring your ears. Washing is made so easy by them that the best families have gone into the laundry business.

If two men, one with a wart on his chin, and the other with freckles, catch twenty-five fish in two hours, how many fish will one man catch with a hook in his nose?

THE motto on a doctor's medicine chest—"Charge, chest-er, charge."

If one tooth-brush cost fifty cents, how much cheaper would it be to use your blacking-brush?

If one muff cost fifty dollars, what will one little muff cost?

WE do not go to sleep in a napkin.

CARPENTERS generally use plane language.

It is not the one with the thickest skull at school that makes the best *skuller*.

OUR tailor is our *pattern* saint.

WELL-DIGGERS have a good deal of *dig*-nity.

THE poems written by a wooden-headed poet would be called logy-rithms, if measured rightly.

THE manager of a depot is not a depo-nent.

BEAT TIME.